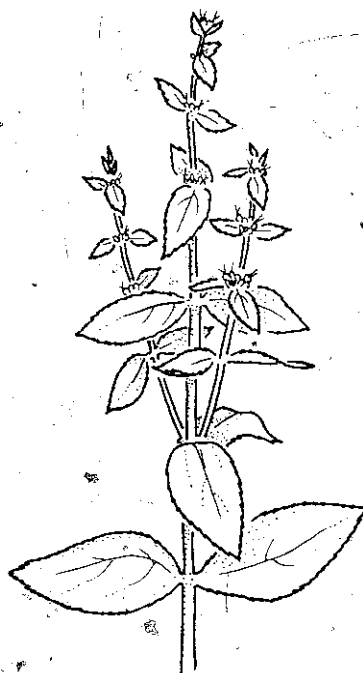


Spearmint tea: steep mint in water to desired strength. Sweeten with honey.

PLATE 294 Spearmint



Peppermint (*Mentha piperata*)

Peppermint grows in wet places, and is naturalized around springs and streams. It has very strong-smelling dark green foliage and pale purple flowers. Peppermint tea is a remedy for colic, and is considered a sleep-inducing sedative.



PLATE 295 Kenny Runion
with peppermint.

Ethel Corn told us that people used to drink it for a sick-stomach. The leaves and stems are gathered, boiling water is poured over them, and the tea is allowed to steep for a few minutes, then strained and sweetened. Either spearmint or peppermint can be used in the following mint recipes.

Mint with new peas: tear young mint leaves in pieces and cook with very young peas.

Mint syrup: two cups sugar; one cup water; one tablespoon fresh or dried mint leaves chopped fine. Stir together and simmer until sugar is completely dissolved. Cover and let stand one hour. Strain and use over fresh fruit or puddings.

Mint-carrot salad: add chopped mint leaves to carrot slaw or to fruit salad.

Mint jelly: do not boil leaves, but pour boiling water over them and let steep. Strain, add sugar and pectin, and cook until it jells.

Mint vinegar: two cups tender mint leaves; one cup sugar; one quart cider vinegar. Let mint stand covered by sugar for five minutes. Bring vinegar to a boil. Add mint and sugar to vinegar and boil three minutes. Strain through cheesecloth and bottle. Let stand several weeks to ripen.

Mint sauce: one bunch mint; $\frac{3}{4}$ tablespoon sugar; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vinegar. Chop mint very fine. Dissolve sugar in vinegar. Add mint and let stand one hour. Then strain.

Mint frosting: chop young mint leaves fine, mix with powdered sugar, soft butter, and drops of cream.

Blue-mountain tea (*Solidago odora*) (family *Compositae*)

Blue-mountain tea, so-called because it grows in the Blue Ridge Mountains, is really a goldenrod, but the only one that has fragrant, anise-scented



PLATE 296 Blue-mountain tea

foliage. It is a slender plant with narrow, shining whole leaves, and a curving head of pale yellow-green flowers. The odor of the foliage is distinctive and it is impossible to mistake the licorice taste and odor for any other plant. It is common in open oak-pine woods, and along trails and roads.

The leaves make a delicious tea, either hot or cold. Steep green or dry leaves in hot water until the tea is a pale golden color. Add sugar, honey, or lemon.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) (family *Compositae*)
(woundwort, nosebleed weed, bloodwort)

Yarrow is a colonial plant, with finely cut gray-green foliage and heads of small white flowers. Both leaves and flowers are strong-smelling. Yarrow grows along roadsides and in old fields. It is a native of Europe naturalized and common in this country.

Originally a "woundwort," the bitter-tasting and aromatic yarrow was said to cure almost any internal or external human ill. Leaves placed on the brow would relieve headache, placed in one's shoe they would help ease sore or blistered feet, and they were often used to bind up wounds.

Leaves are brewed into a bracing, not unpleasant tea, good and warming in cold weather. Yarrow is also used as a flavoring or as a potherb.



PLATE 297 Yarrow

Yarrow tea: place dry or green leaves in a cup, pour hot water over them, steep only until color shows. Drink without sweetening.

Fried yarrow: fry in butter until brown and serve hot, sprinkled with sugar and the juice of an orange.

Yarrow salad: use very young leaves; mix sparingly with cress, sorrel, or violet leaves. Add oil and vinegar, salt and pepper.

Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) (family *Compositae*)

Chamomile is a low-growing annual, with finely cut, very pleasantly scented foliage, and topped by small white, daisylike flowers with bright gold centers. It is a native of Europe that persists around old gardens. Flower heads are gathered and make very pleasant-tasting tea. They should be gathered at noon, when the sun is shining, for then the dried blooms will have the most flavor.

Chamomile tea: gently steep a teaspoon of leaves in hot water until it is a pale golden color. Add sugar, honey, syrup, or a dash of ginger.

FLAVORINGS

Some wild plants are used mainly as accents, or seasoning, in salads or with other potherbs.

Wood sorrel (*Oxalis filipes*, *Oxalis corniculata*)
(sour grass, shamrock)

Wood sorrels are delicate small plants, with clover-like tri-divided leaves. They have small, bright yellow flowers. They are found in open woodlands,



PLATE 298 Sour grass or wood sorrel

on damp trails, and as a weed in gardens or cropland. The leaves have a deliciously tart taste, but must be used sparingly, for they contain oxalic acid. Sometimes they are called "sweet and sour" for the leaf stems are sweet and the leaves themselves are sour.

Wood sorrel lemonade: boil leaves 15 minutes, cool, strain, add honey and lemons.

Fish sauce: one cup of chopped leaves mixed with a spoonful of flour, melted margarine, and a tablespoon of vinegar. Spoon over fried fish. OR: chop leaves into melted butter or margarine, add salt and pepper, and use over fish.

Wood sorrel cream sauce: two cups of finely chopped sorrel, water, sugar, salt, pepper, and one cup of sour cream. Cook and drain sorrel, add sour cream and seasonings. Mix well and use over other greens.

Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) (family *Umbelliferae*)
(dilly weed)

Dill is an annual which grows to four feet, with striped, hollow stems, and finely cut, very odorous leaves. Flowers appear in rather good-looking, large, flat, yellow-green umbels. Dill will naturalize as a garden weed, and grow in waste places.

The leaves are the main flavoring ingredient in dill pickles. Dill water was used for stomach troubles. It is also used to flavor vinegar, beans, and salads. The seeds are also edible and used as flavoring in salads and cooked vegetables.



PLATE 299 Dill weed

Fish sauce: chop dill fine, blend with melted butter, pour over fish. OR: mix together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or margarine, half teaspoon salt, dash pepper, half teaspoon dill weed (or seeds), one teaspoon parsley. Spread over fish and broil.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) (family *Compositae*)
(bitter buttons)

Tansy is a tall herb, with dark green stems, and very strong-smelling, deeply cut leaves. The stalks are topped by a cluster of yellow button flowers. This European plant has naturalized along roadsides and is found around old gardens. It was planted in orchards in the belief it would keep pests away from the fruit. Leaves were rubbed on new beehives to make the bees feel at home. People used to gather tansy to flavor puddings, omelets, salads and cheeses, and special cakes called "tansies."



PLATE 300 Tansy

NUTS

There is a tremendous variety of nuts which grow on trees in the mountains. White and black walnuts, hickory nuts, and hazelnuts are usually eaten plain or used in baking. Chinquapins, beechnuts and wild chestnuts are sometimes eaten plain, but more often they are roasted or boiled in water for twenty to thirty minutes. Chestnuts are sometimes used in stuffing for turkey. Any kind of nut can be stored for the winter. Take the hull off the nuts, except beechnuts, before storing.

Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) (family *Juglandaceae*)

Black walnuts are large trees up to 150 feet high, in rich mountain coves or along streams. They have frequently been planted and mark old home-sites long after the dwellings are gone. Walnut wood has been prized for gunstocks and fine furniture, and as a result walnut trees have been almost completely eliminated in some areas. The bark is dark, often moss-covered. The black walnut has twigs with a light pith and very large leaves with many leaflets. Twigs and foliage have a characteristic odor. The flowers are green catkins that appear with the new leaves.

Walnuts are round and dark with a hard four-celled kernel, covered by a thick, greenish husk. The hulls yield a brown dye. Nut meats are prized for candies, cakes, and cookies.



PLATE 301 Black walnut

Black walnut pudding: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped walnuts; one tablespoon butter; four teaspoons cornstarch; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk; two egg yolks; three egg whites; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; tiny bit of cream of tartar; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar; one teaspoon maple flavoring. Butter a baking dish. Mix all ingredients except egg whites. Place in greased baking dish. Top with well-beaten egg whites. Bake at 350° about forty-five minutes.

Walnut pickle: Gather the nuts when they can be easily pierced with a needle. Soak in brine one week. Remove and sun for a few hours. Soak in cold water for twelve hours. Put in jars and pour over them boiling-hot vinegar to which has been added one teaspoonful each of ginger, cloves, mace, and pepper; two onions; a small quantity of horseradish; and two pods red pepper for each quart vinegar. Cover well. The pickles will be ready for use in a month or more.

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) (family *Juglandaceae*)
(white walnut, oil nut)

The butternut is a rather uncommon tree, found in rich river bottoms and valleys in the mountain regions at lower altitudes. It is a medium-sized tree with smooth gray branches and dark bark. Green flowers appear with the leaves, which have eleven to seventeen leaflets with sticky petioles. Nuts are oval in a very thick, sticky hull and can be ground into flour or oil, or can be pickled when green. They can be substituted for black walnuts in any recipes calling for such nuts.

Jake Waldroop says that butternuts "are mostly just to eat. They're sweet. You let them dry and crack them up and they're good."



PLATE 302 Butternut hickory

Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)
(king nut)

The pecan is not native to the mountain area, but often is found growing around old homesites, and sometimes in woods' edges where the nuts have been planted by squirrels or bluejays. It is a large tree, fifty to one hundred feet high, with brown bark. Leaves have seven to nine slightly downy leaflets. Flowers occur with the young leaves. The oval nuts have very thin husks and shells and very sweet kernels.

Shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*)

The shagbark is a tremendous tree found on mountain slopes and in rich coves. The shaggy bark separates in layers and is a distinctive feature of this hickory. Leaves are very large with eleven to seventeen leaflets. Nuts have thin shells and are very sweet and edible.

Shellbark hickory (*Carya laciniosa*)

The shellbark is more commonly found in the Mississippi River Valley or in the central heartlands. It is occasionally found in the mountains along streams. It has a flaky bark and one- to two-foot leaves, with seven leaflets. Nuts are in a thick, bony shell.

Mockernut (*Carya tomentosa*)
(white heart hickory)

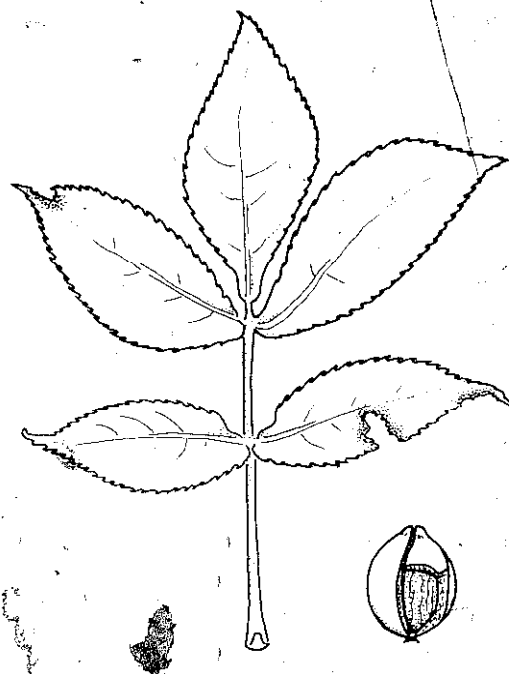
Mockernut is a common tree found in oak-pine woods and on chestnut-oak ridges. It is a large tree with ridged gray bark, and leaves with seven large, rather smooth leaflets. The nuts are large, with thick shells and on individual trees vary in size and thickness of hulls and in edibility.

Pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*)
(sweet pignut)

The pignut hickory is a small or medium-sized tree found in oak-pine woods in dry, light soil. It has ridged bark and smooth leaves with three to seven (usually five) leaflets. Nuts are small and slightly flattened in a thin hull. Nuts on individual trees vary greatly—some are acrid and bitter, others sweet and edible.

Hickory nuts have always been good eating worth the effort of getting them out of their shells. If a girl really liked a young man she would go

PLATE 303 Pignut hickory



to the considerable trouble of making him a hickory nut cake. Nuts were also used in candy and cookies. Hickory bark was broken off and chewed by many as chewing gum, as with the bark of the sweet birch.

Jake Waldroop told us, "That was the wild hog's feed for all winter. The nuts fall off and the leaves fall on them, and they'll lay there all winter. You take the sealy bark nut—now you can crack them if you've got good sound, strong teeth. Why, I've cracked many of 'em with my teeth. They have the biggest kernel of any hickory nut. I've gotten bushels on the ridge right up there."

Hickory nut cake: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter; one cup sugar; three egg whites, beaten stiff; half cup milk; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped hickory nut meats; one teaspoon cream of tartar; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda. Preheat oven to 350° . Cream butter and sugar, add milk and flour alternately. Add eggs and nuts, and beat until smooth. Then sprinkle in cream of tartar and the soda dissolved in one teaspoon milk. Beat and place in a greased and floured pan and bake forty-five minutes.

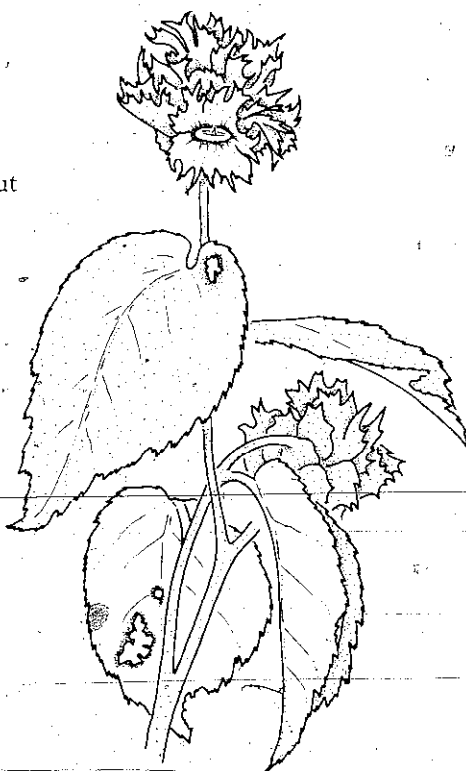
Nut brittle: spread hickory nut meats in a shallow pan. Melt white or brown sugar in a saucepan; pour over nuts quickly, shaking it all the time. Let set. Break into small pieces.

Hickory nut pie: Use one cup syrup; three eggs; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped hickory nuts; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ pound butter; one teaspoon vanilla. Place hickory nuts in unbaked pie shell. Mix syrup, sugar, and eggs together well. Add melted butter and vanilla. Pour mixture over nuts. Place in 400° oven. Bake ten minutes (IMPORTANT!) and then reduce heat to 300° and bake thirty minutes. (Pecans or walnuts may be used, instead.)

Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*, *Corylus americana*) (family *Corylaceae*)
(beaked hazelnut, filberts)

The American hazelnuts are shrubs found in thickets on hillsides and along streams. Both shrubs have soft brown bark. Male flowers appear as long catkins, called lamb's tails, which form in late autumn, and lengthen into masses of yellow pollen in early spring. Both species have similar round-toothed leaves, but the American hazelnut has its nut in a ruffled husk, while the beaked hazelnut has a long, beaked nut covering.

PLATE 304 Hazelnut



Besides being good to eat, especially roasted, the nuts would be used to tell fortunes on Halloween. If you named the nuts for your sweethearts and placed them on an open fire, the nut that jumped or cracked first represented the lover who would come calling first.

Nuts could be ground into meal to make filbert bread, or grated hazelnuts added to cake frostings.

Toasted hazelnuts: heat $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or margarine. Add one pound shelled nuts. Cook until the nuts are a deep brown, stirring often. Drain on a paper towel. Sprinkle with salt.

Hazelnut cookies: one egg white; one tablespoon sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour; one teaspoon baking powder; one cup grated nuts. Mix, drop in small spoonfuls on a greased tin. Bake in moderate oven.

Sugared nut meats: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable oil; two cups powdered sugar; two teaspoons rum flavor; dash of cinnamon; dash of nutmeg; dash of ginger; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups shelled nuts. Cream oil, sugar, flavoring and spices. Spread nuts on cookie sheet, heat in moderate oven ten minutes. Turn hot nuts into the cream mixture and stir. Separate and spread on a cookie sheet to cool.

Many recipes using nuts can be adapted for whatever species is available, or various kinds of nuts can be used in combinations. The recipe given below can be used for walnuts, hickory nuts, or hazelnuts.

Nut brittle squares: butter the outside bottom of an eight-inch-square pan, and spread evenly with one cup finely chopped nuts. Set pan, nut side up, on a tray. Put one cup sugar in skillet and heat, stirring until golden brown and syrupy, pour over nuts at once. When slightly cooled, remove in one piece to a board and cut into two-inch squares.

Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) (family *Fagaceae*)

Beech is a beautiful forest tree with smooth bark and graceful branches. It grows along streams and on rich bluffs and banks. Its leaves are shiny, very regularly veined, and turn bright yellow in early autumn. The beech flowers in the early spring with the newly green leaves. The small, triangular, edible nuts are encased in a very prickly bur. The nuts are rich in protein, calcium, and phosphorous. Roasted beechnuts were once ground and used as a coffee substitute. They were also ground for cooking oil, meal, or made into beechnut butter.

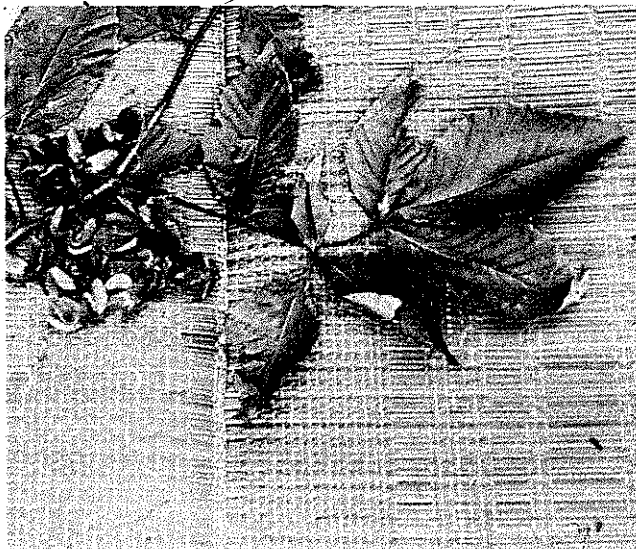


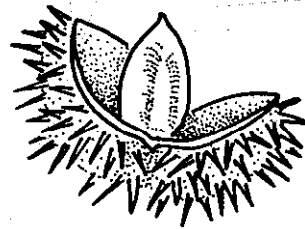
PLATE 305 Beechnuts

Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) (family *Fagaceae*)

The American chestnut was once a dominant tree of the mountains before the chestnut blight spread across the hills and devastated the chestnut forests. Jake Waldroop said, "I've seen the time when you could go out on this hill and pick up about three bushels a day. They was laying there by the thousands of bushels—hundreds of acres covered by chestnuts. Now we don't have any chestnuts. A blight hit up here and killed 'em all. Some people think that they'll come back again, but as for me, I don't know. I don't think they will. I'll find some (the trees) every once in a while as big as my leg and then there'll come a big brown spot on it and it'll die."

Sprout growths of chestnuts still struggle for existence on the hills. Occasionally a tree reaches a size large enough to bloom with showy white flower spikes, and bears a crop of rough husked nuts. The chestnut is enclosed in a hard brown outer shell and a bitter inner skin that is usually peeled off before using. The nut is made up almost entirely of carbohydrates and water. They can be ground into flour or added to bread.

Chestnut croquettes: mix one cup mashed, boiled chestnuts with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla, two beaten egg yolks, two tablespoons cream, one teaspoon sugar. Shape in balls, roll in crumbs, and fry in deep fat.



PLATES 306-307 Chestnuts

Chinquapin (*Castanea pumila*) (family *Fagaceae*)

The chinquapin is a spreading shrub, or small tree, found on mountain-sides and in the piedmont oak-pine woods. It is more resistant to blight than the American chestnuts, and is still abundant in some areas, bearing a crop of small, but very sweet and edible nuts. Leaves are slender, toothed slightly, and dark green in color. Racemes of white flowers appear in the early summer. The nuts are enclosed in very prickly burrs.

Rev. Morgan told us about a chinquapin tree they used to play in as children. "We would climb and make a treehouse in it. We didn't use chinquapins in cooking. We would boil them and the girls would string them on threads and wear them as necklaces. Then, if they could get by with it, they'd eat them during school. We'd play games with chinquapins, one was jack-in-the-bush."

Chinquapin stuffing: use finely chopped or ground nuts instead of bread crumbs in your favorite stuffing recipe. The small, sweet chinquapins can also be used in any chestnut recipe.



PLATE 308 Chinquapins

White oak (*Quercus alba*) (family *Fagaceae*)

The white oak is a common forest tree, growing to gigantic size, with flaky white bark and scalloped, thin, green leaves. Catkins appear with the new leaves in early spring. The large acorns mature in one year, and can be made into flour, or boiled or roasted for food. Today few people will bother with the slow process necessary to make acorn flour, but it was once a staple of pioneer diet. Acorns were used to make flour when, as Laurabell York said, "Times were rough." It was usually mixed half and half with regular flour. To make it, peel and roast acorns until they are



PLATE 309 White oak leaves and acorns

thoroughly dry, but not burned. Pound them into a powder and use this powder as flour.

The large acorns of the chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*) and the yellow chestnut oak (*Quercus muehlenbergia*) can also be prepared for food but aren't as sweet as those of the white oak.

Coffee: parch acorns, and grind. It makes a red coffee—"real good, just as good as bought coffee."

Baked acorns: make slit in the acorn shell. Bake until shells crack off.

Acorn Indian pudding: one cup acorn meal; four cups water; sorghum syrup. Put three cups water on to boil. Mix meal with remaining cup, stir until smooth. Add to boiling water, stir until thickened. Add syrup. Cover and cook fifteen minutes at low heat.

Acorn meal: grind acorns, spread meal 1/2-inch thick on a porous cloth and pour hot water over the meal. Repeat several times. Meal can be used instead of cornmeal. or: boil acorns two hours, pour off black water; soak in cold water three to four days, then grind into a paste. This makes bread dough. or: pulverize acorns. Allow water to trickle through meal for twenty hours. Dry and grind again. Use one cup acorn meal to one cup regular flour in muffins.

WOODROW SHOPE BUILDS A SMOKEHOUSE

Most old-timers would laugh at us if we told them that one of the biggest things to happen on Middle Skeener this year was that Woodrow Shope built a smokehouse—but it's true. And everyone in the community turned out for it.

When we stopped at the little country store near his home to find out exactly where he lived, the men there all commented on how well the building was progressing. A bread man stocking shelves in the back called out that he had just been by there and lots of neighbors were out watching. When we got there, one of the neighbors was splitting boards to cover the roof. He hadn't done it in so long he just wanted to see if he still knew how. School was almost out for the day, and some of the parents had left to get their children and bring them by just so they could see it going up.

Woodrow, a recently retired Forest Service employee who now does things like this to help fill up his days, laughed when we commented on the attention his log building was getting. "People even stop on the road and look as they go by," he said. "Everyone's talking about it. I saw one neighbor in the doctor's office this morning. He said, 'That thing sure is looking good. We was all in hopes you'd cover it with boards, and sure enough, you *are*.'"

Woodrow has spent all his life working—mostly in the woods—and even though he's retired now, he's not about to stop. He believes in staying active; staying tough: "When the Lord made a man, He made him good. He made him tough. And this old body is really put together, buddy. It takes something to pull it apart. You just can't hardly tear it apart it's so well put together."

And he believes in observing the world closely and in learning by experience. Through years of close observation he learned how to do most of what he does best. "On splitting boards, [see *The Foxfire Book*, page 45]

you have to learn how to take advantage of your timber. There is a skill to anything you do. I don't care what it is. You might think anybody can dig with a mattock or shovel with a shovel. They can't do it. They can *pretend* to, but there's a skill to using them tools. There's a right way and a wrong way to anything you do. I've seen people work themselves to *death* with a mattock or a shovel and *still* never shovel no dirt! They'll stomp down more than they dig up.

"Those old people used their experience that they'd had, and they'd watched stuff till they *knew* what the story was; and that's the best idea that you've ever had of anything. You can read in books—you can't get by anymore without that—but still you've got to have a little bit of mother wit and common sense about anything. And they ain't no book knowledge that beats experience. I don't care what you say. No book knowledge can take the place of experience because you know that stuff like you know your name. You know exactly what's going to happen. The

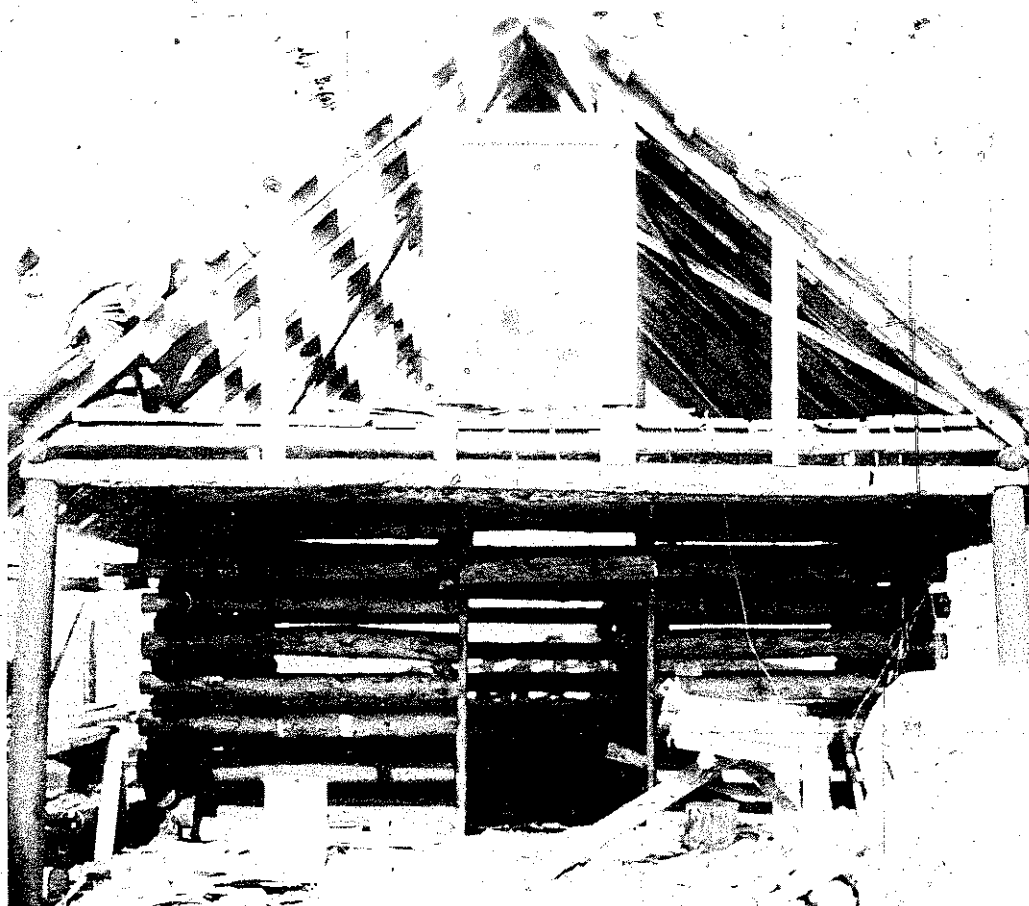


PLATE 310 A smokehouse below, a storage loft above, and a covered space out front for firewood and yard equipment.



PLATE 311 *Foxfire* editors watch as Woodrow splits the white oak boards for covering the roof.

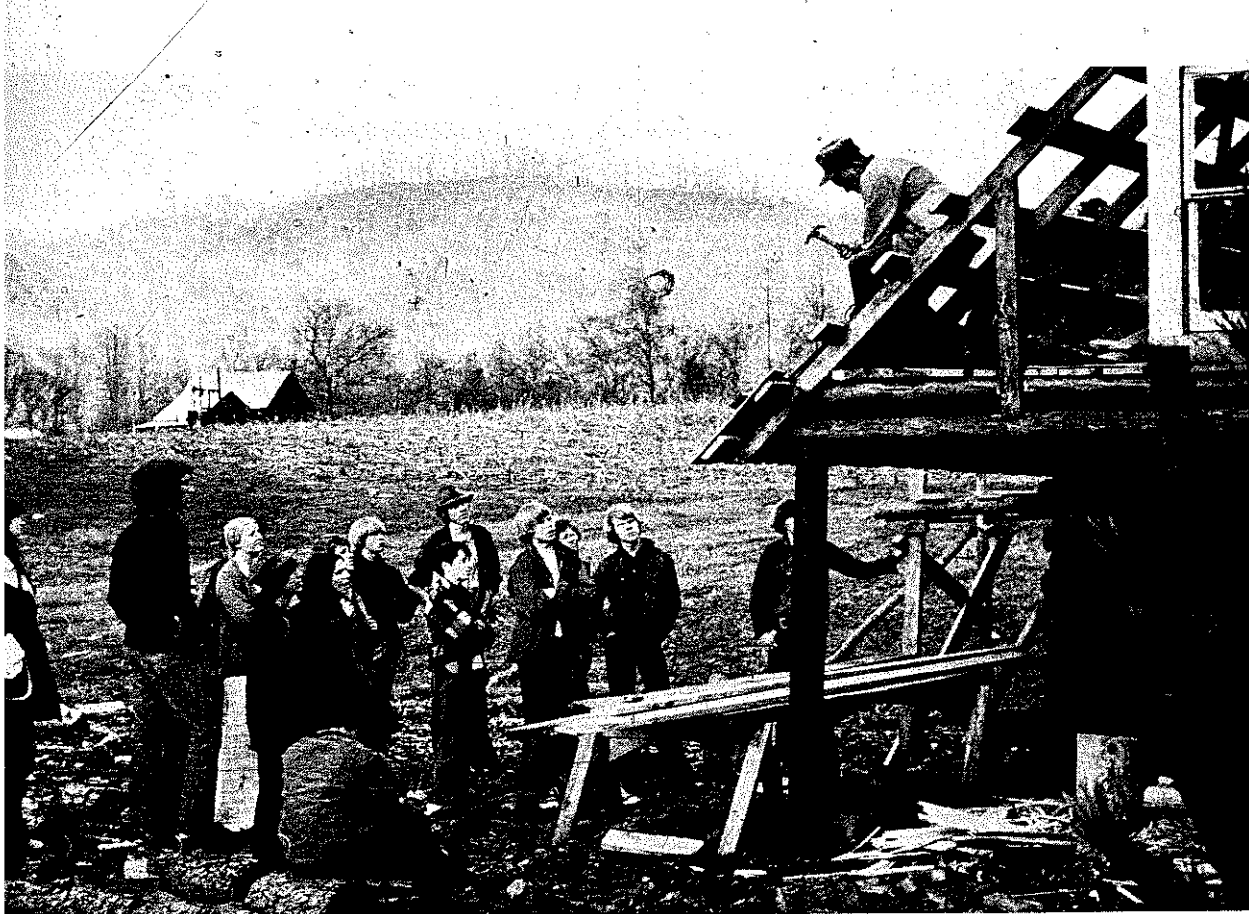


PLATE 312 A group of *Foxfire* editors watch as Woodrow nails on row after row of 24'-long hand-split white oak boards. He is placing them on board fashion (see Plate 315).

only difference between a professional and a non-professional is a piece of paper. That's all they is to it."

Though people might disagree with some of his beliefs, he can back them all up through personal encounters and experiences. When we asked him about clearcutting, for example, knowing that he had seen lots of it with the Forest Service, he took a stand formulated on the basis of what he'd seen—not what he'd heard: "It's fine if it's applied where it *needs* to be applied. Now if you've got a southeast exposure back in these mountains—and the most of them you've got a lot of it—and if you go there and look at the timber before it's clearcut, it'll be pretty scrubby stuff. And it's been there—if you get down and count the rings of it—no telling how long it's been there. Now I say, and I've said it all the time, that that needs clearcutting and completely doing away with whatever's there and setting it in pine or something—something that will grow in that site. They've tried for years to grow hardwood there and it hasn't grown. It just ain't there. It's pretended to grow, but it's just got up maybe pulpwood. Only occasionally will you find a saw log.

"And then you spoke of the game business. Now it's *exactly true* that the best game pasture you've ever seen for deer browse is those sprouts coming back [after clearcutting]. It really works. It's good for that. I've seen it happen. Them clearcut areas makes a deer pasture *right* for about three years.

"But I don't believe in going out here in a place where there's good, rich land and the timber is growing [and clearcutting]. The thing you want to do in them places is to thin and give the rest of it room to grow. But you needn't expect to go up here on a southeast exposure and be able to grow big tall red oak timber, or black oak. It just don't grow there. That just isn't the site for it."

This concentration on personal observation has made him a man who is leery of beliefs that smack of superstition. When we asked him about madstones, he chuckled and told us a story: "They supposedly come out of a white deer's paunch. I've never seen one, but they claim they can cure a snake bite or anything. No matter what it was, it was good for everything. That's what the old people said. I know one time there was a fellow told me, said a fellow hollered at him, 'Run down here right quick with that madstone. A snake's bit me!'

"And he said he went down with this madstone, washed it, and they applied it to the place and it wouldn't stick. He said if it was the poisonous kind, the madstone would stick and draw the poison out. It'd have a tendency to hold to it. And he said he washed it three times, put it

on, and it wouldn't stick. Said he come to find out a darn *lizard* bit him. It wasn't even a snake.

"But I've never seen one, and frankly I don't think there is such a thing, between you and me and the gatepost."

But the real thing we had come to find out about was smokehouses. There was little doubt that he knew, again, what he was talking about. He had a beauty standing behind him to prove it. Here's what we learned.

There is no specific size for a smokehouse. They were tailor-made to a family's needs. Sometimes they stood alone among a complex of outbuildings. Sometimes they were part of another building that had several uses. He has seen one in the top floor of an apple and potato cellar, for example. His own building is a smokehouse below, a storage loft above, and a covered space in front for firewood and yard equipment. It is based on the design for the old-style corn cribs: the wagon would pull up in front under the overhang, the corn would be tossed through the door into the lower storage area, and the top could be used for storage, a hay loft, or a smokehouse. With the logs chinked to prevent freezing temperatures inside, the bottom could have been used for a potato cellar and storage for canned goods.

The only real recommendation Woodrow would insist on for a smokehouse is that it be animal- and insect-proof. To keep out flies, he tacked aluminum screen wire to the inside of the logs (since he isn't going to chink them) and to the underside of the ceiling between the rafters. The salt will eventually eat holes in the wire, but it's easy enough to replace when that happens. To keep out rats, he dug a trench six inches into the ground under the bottom logs, and cemented this all in to make a solid barrier that rats can't get through and won't tunnel under. A door and the walls themselves will keep out animals such as dogs. And the 24-inch overhang that the eaves provide will keep out most rain and sunlight. The floor will be left as dirt to help keep it cool inside. He used a board roof to keep the building from accumulating heat, or sweating on the underside. The comb of the roof is turned so that it will shed all blowing rain from the southeast, the direction from which most of the rains in the valley come.

The logs Woodrow used are pine. They came from a beetle kill nearby and were snaked in with a horse, peeled, trimmed up and treated with a half-and-half mixture of creosote and diesel oil brushed on to preserve the wood and keep powder beetles away. He used treated telephone poles for the sills, and set them slightly off the ground on stone pillars. Traditionally, the sills would have been locust and the sides poplar or chestnut. He

PLATE 313 Two rows on and six more to go. The 1x6 at Woodrow's foot is tacked on to help him keep the boards' bottom edges straight and true.

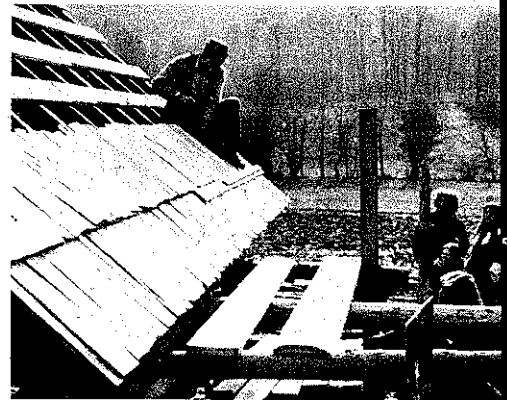
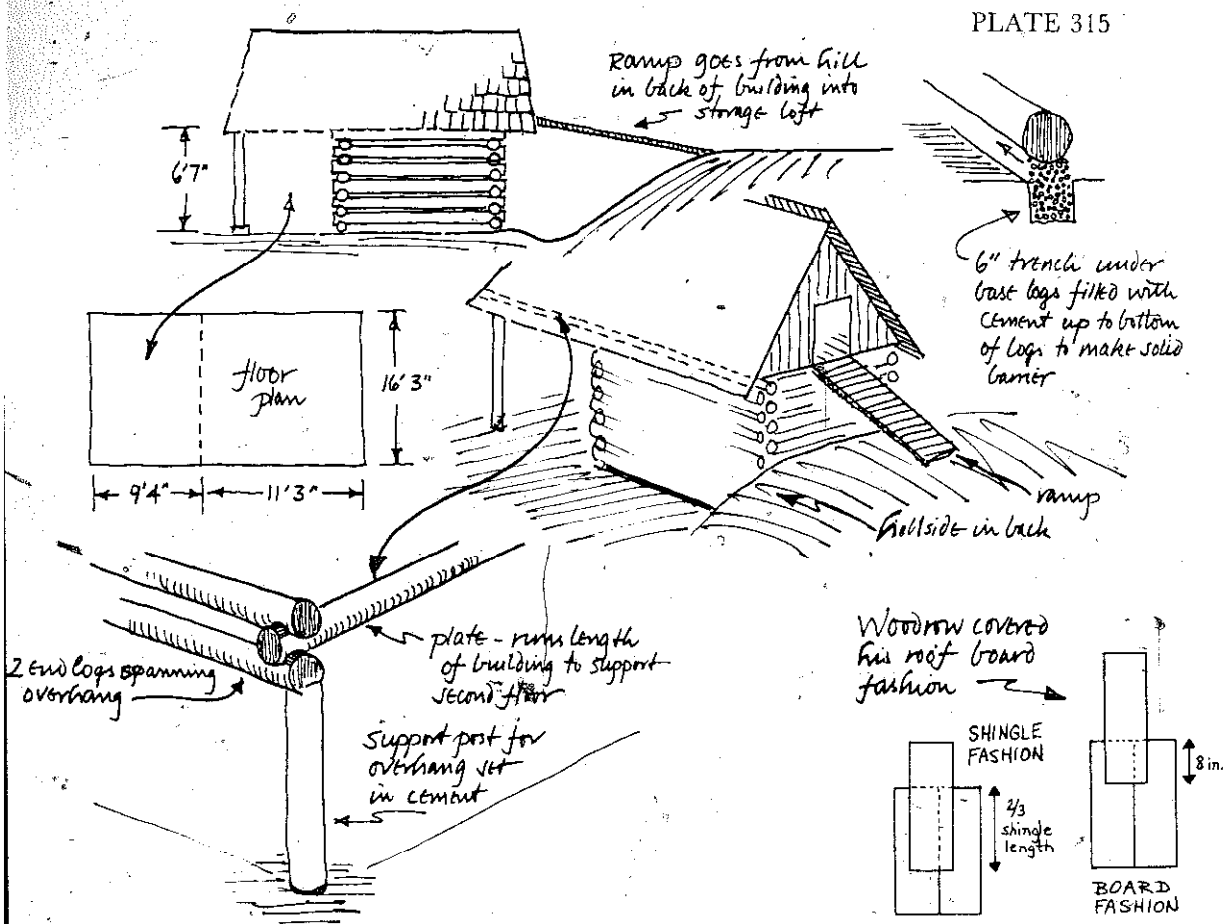


PLATE 314 The smokehouse from the side.



chose pine, however, since the wood had to be used in some way or destroyed.

Inside the smokehouse room, wooden, waist-high meat benches will be built out of two-inch-thick lumber to set the curing pork on.

His method for curing is to kill the hog in November as the weather turns cold, coat it completely (top, sides and bottom) while still warm with a heavy coat of plain white salt, and then let it absorb the salt for about three days. He then slides one-inch-thick, narrow slats under the meat to raise it off the counter—otherwise the moisture the salt draws out of the meat will keep it damp and make it soggy.

When the weather begins to turn warm again in the spring, he removes the meat from the racks, washes it well, dips the joints into a tub of boiling water and then coats it with 20 Mule Team Borax. Then he hangs the meat in cloth sacks, tying them to the rafters with white oak splits or rope.

He doesn't smoke the meat himself, but if he did, it would be done in the spring, and the smokehouse would have to be closed (he'd have to chink his logs) to keep the fire smothered and smoking. A fire of hickory wood chips would be built in an iron wash pot, and then smothered so it would just smoulder.

He intends to use it. The only thing that worries him is that our winters seem to be getting warmer, and pork requires a good cold winter to keep the meat from spoiling during the four-month curing process. But he's got high hopes.

And even if he can never use it successfully as a smokehouse, he at least has caused some excitement in the community.

As we left, he asked, laughing, "Well, you boys think you could build a smokehouse if you had to? It's not complicated. You just got to get in there and pitch."

WILLIAM HORNE, STEVE HELMERS AND RICKY WARE

Photographs by Kenny Taylor and Russell Arthur.

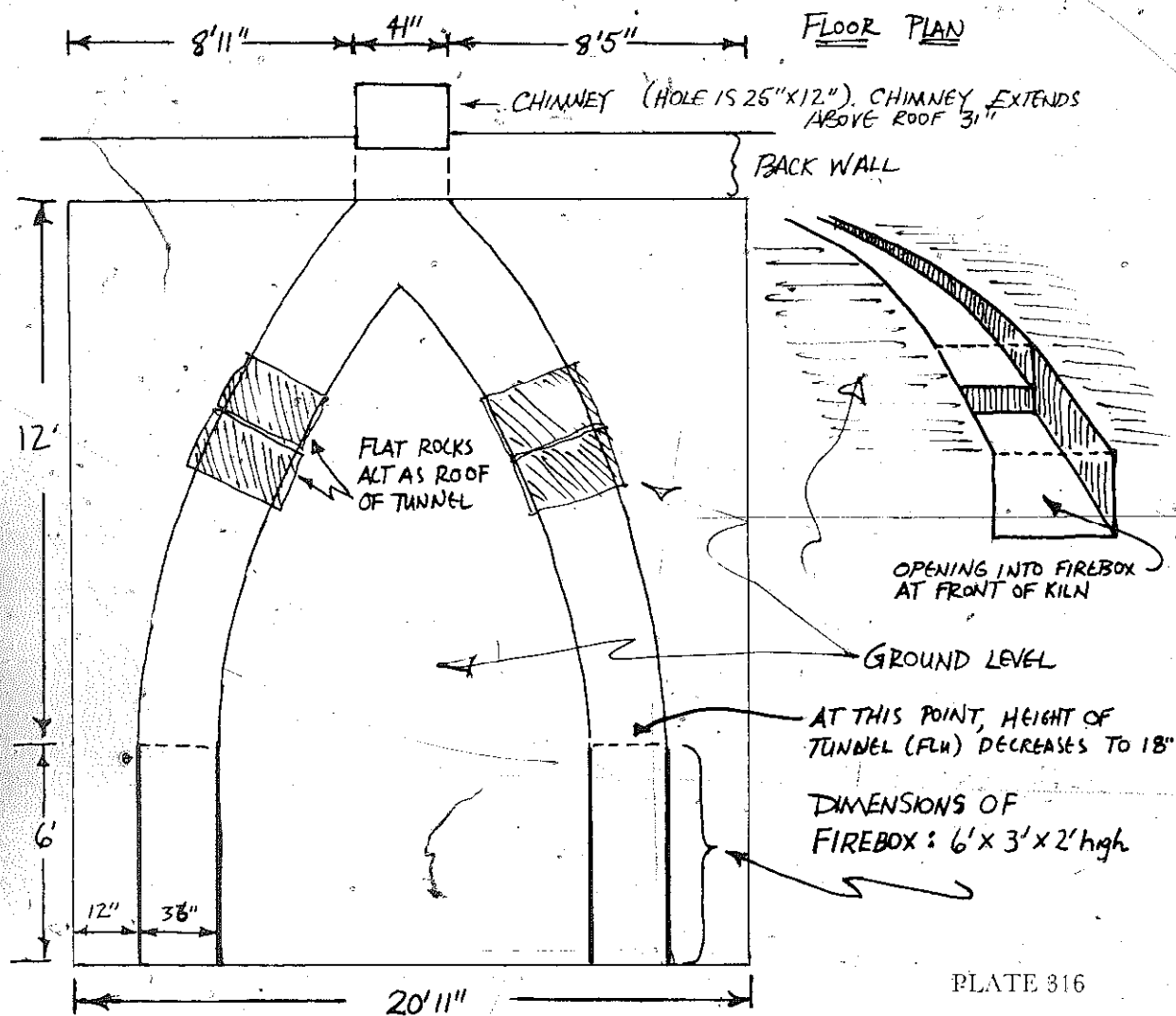
BUILDING A LUMBER KILN

Today there are many kilns used for drying green lumber quickly, but thirty years ago they were hard to find. To fill that need at one farm in our county, Claude Darnell constructed one for the Jay Hambidge Art Foundation. Mrs. Jay Hambidge asked Claude, a master mason who built all of her chimneys and rock walls, to build one so that they could dry and produce their own lumber for Foundation studios.

When we talked to Claude about it, he told us that he obtained the pattern from Lex Darnell and built the kiln in 1942. Between the twenty-foot foundation walls, a "V"-shaped trough was dug into the ground extending from the front of the building to the back (see diagram, *Plate 316*), its walls and top made of "blue rock" (flat, granite slabs) strong enough to withstand the intense heat. This trough doubled as both the dual firebox and as a flue connected to the chimney in the back wall. Wood was put into the fireboxes through the two ground-level openings in the front foundation wall. The system was totally enclosed to prevent the flames from igniting the drying lumber.

Above the foundation was the floor on which the green lumber was stacked (leaving plenty of air spaces between the boards). Two small holes in the front foundation (see diagram, *Plate 317*) and a larger hole in the center of the kiln's roof acted as an air circulation system to draw off the steam while the kiln was being fired.

Shortly after Claude completed it, he stacked it full of fresh lumber and fired it up. For thirty-six hours he kept the fire burning steadily, using green wood for fuel. Neighbors gathered to watch the process, turning it into a community event. Mrs. Hambidge was there. But to everyone's disappointment, when the door was opened at the end of the thirty-six hours, it was found that the wood was still wet. It hadn't worked.



To this day, Claude is not sure why. He knows the heat was intense enough. It was so hot, in fact, that the pressure split a portion of the front wall leaving a crack to the left of the door that can still be seen today. The closest he can come to a remedy for anyone that might want to try to build one today is to suggest that they increase the size of the three air circulation holes so that the steam will be drawn off faster instead of being allowed to build up on the inside. He said that if he were to build another one, he might even put two vent holes instead of one in the roof.

He also suggests that the roof be made peaked instead of flat to give more working room inside the building for stacking the lumber, and that steel reinforcing beams be added to the kiln walls.



PLATE 317 Claude Darnell, the builder of the kiln, with David Dillard.

PLATE 318 The lumber kiln from the front.





PLATE 319 Note the rock work above the door frame, a good example of the kind of work for which Claude is noted.



PLATE 320 Detail of the vent below the front door.



PLATE 321 Claude explains the construction of the kiln to Terry York (left) and David Dillard.



PLATE 322 Looking down on the kiln from the bank that runs behind it. Note the chimney, and, barely visible at the extreme left, the vent hole in the roof.

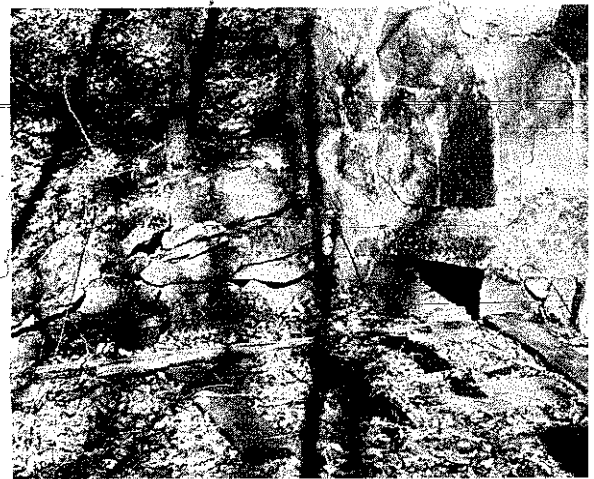
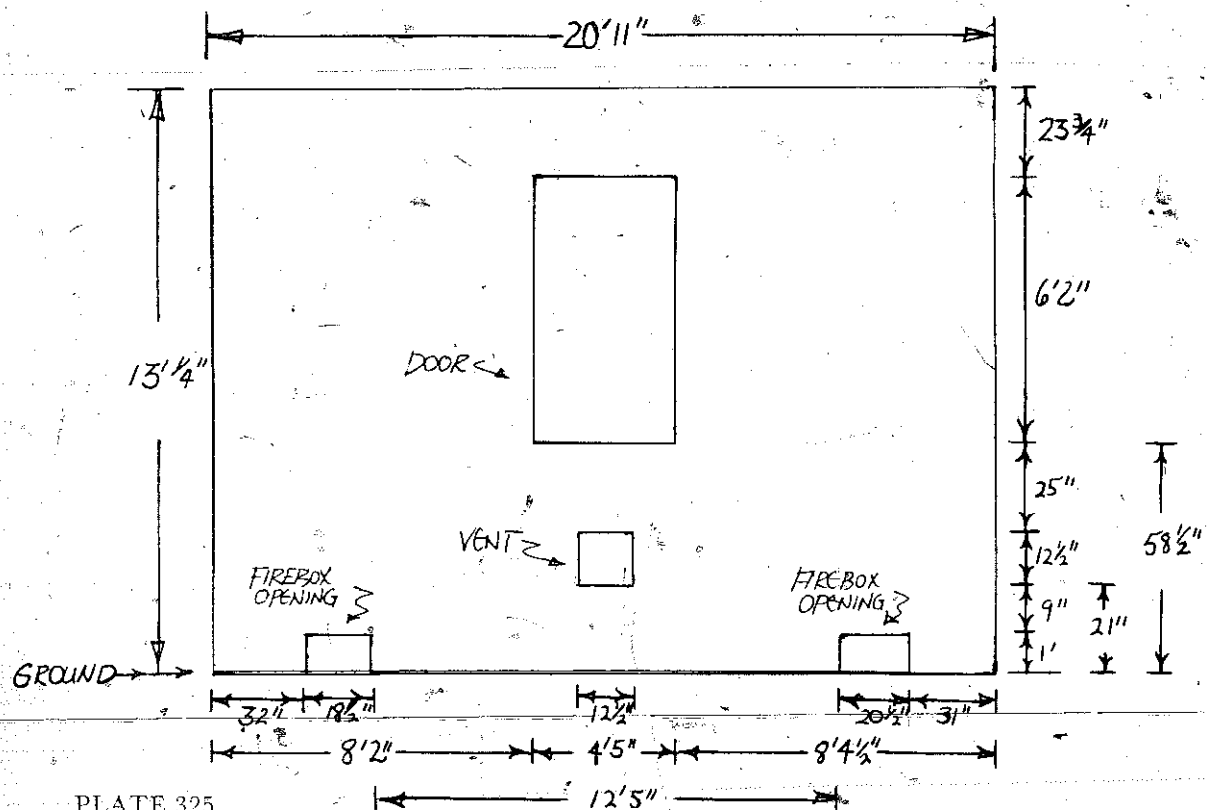


PLATE 323 The opening into one of the fireboxes.



PLATE 324 Three-quarter view of kiln from the front.

FRONT OF BUILDING:



But he'll never build another one. This first one was abandoned after its first trial and never used again. Another was not built to take its place, and it still stands, slowly wearing away.

Written and photographed by Roy Dickerson, David Dillard and Terry York.

Dick Harrison also remembers building lumber kilns, but they were much simpler than the one built by Claude Darnell. The ones he remembers were made of wood and sometimes some tin was used for the roof.

When asked for possible reasons for the failure of the kiln Claude built for the Hambidge Foundation, Mr. Harrison gave two possibilities: 1) They did not burn it long enough (Mr. Harrison's kilns required an eight- to ten-day burn); 2) they didn't leave enough ventilation for the steam-laden air to escape quickly.

Kilns like the one that follows were makeshift things. They were usually used once and then might be torn down after they served their purpose. Generally wood was not kilned unless it was to be used as flooring or weather boarding. Framing lumber was generally air-dried.

The length of the lumber to be dried determined the size of the kiln. The dimensions used in the following instructions are for a kiln to dry twenty-foot lumber.

Step 1: Get thirteen 6" to 8" (dia.) poles. You can use whatever kind of wood you want. You'll need six 16' long, one 14' long, and six 12' long; or you may use the same length (app. 12') for all (see *Step 5*).

Step 2: Either set the poles in the ground or brace them up well enough so they can stand alone when you start nailing slabs to the outside. Set the poles as shown in *Plate 326*.

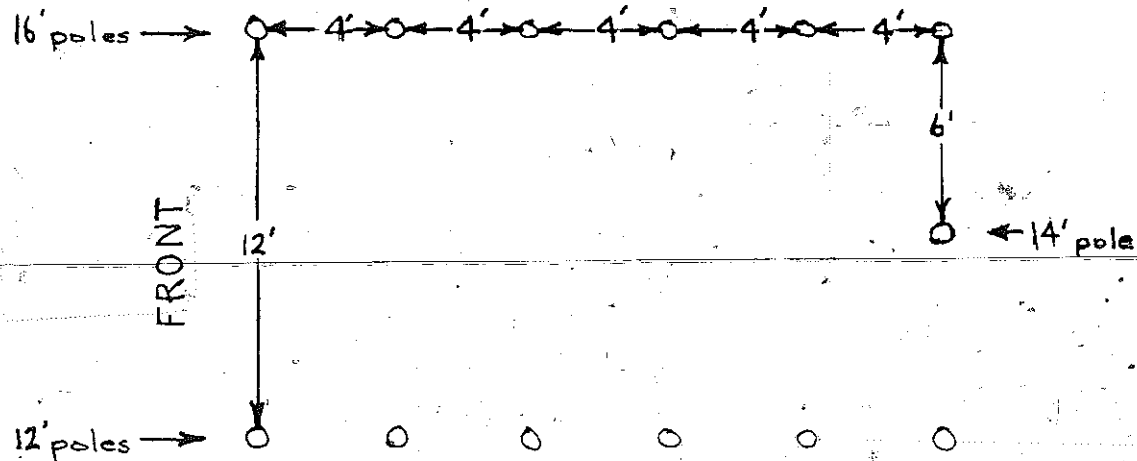


PLATE 326

Step 3: Run stringers across the width. Notch them into the poles as in *Plate 327*, starting with the second pole from the front and going back. It is a good idea to use about a 2"×8". Don't just nail these, as they have to support too much weight. Make sure the stringers are set evenly about 8' above the ground so the lumber you lay across them rests equally on all.

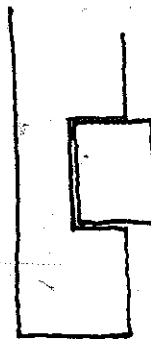


PLATE 327

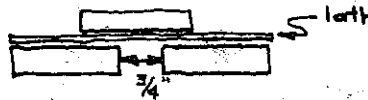
Step 4: Nail rough boarding around the outside within 4" to 6" of the top of the poles, leaving the front of the building open.

Step 5: The roof can be of any type you want. Mr. Harrison recommends the shed-type roof (slanting in one direction) as the best and easiest to build. If you want to build an "A"-type roof, however, cut all the poles in *Step 1* the same length.

Step 6: Dig a pit 6" to 8" deep starting about 4' back from the front and going to about 4' from each of the walls. Throw the dirt up against the walls. Don't make the pit any deeper than about 8" or the fire won't burn well.

Step 7: Stack the lumber as shown in *Plate 328*, continuing the pattern to as near the roof and walls as you want.

PLATE 328



Step 8: Start a fire in the pit. Build it up to a good low flame (Mr. Harrison remembers getting the fire too high and burning one up one time)—a good barbecue fire—and keep it at about this level. It will take eight to ten days to dry a load of green lumber. Someone will have to stay with it all the time.

There are gauges to determine when the lumber is dried thoroughly, but if you don't have one the best idea is cut into one of the boards and feel it to see if it is dried out.

Step 9: When you remove the lumber from the kiln it will be black with smoke and soot and "the nastiest stuff to handle you ever saw" but it will dress down beautifully.

BUTTER CHURNS

Many years ago men who worked skillfully with wood were indispensable to those around them.

Everything from houses to banjos required wood, and men who knew how to work with wood were needed in every community. One essential trade was that of a cooper—someone who made kegs, barrels, buckets, and other related vessels. These wooden containers were used to hold cornmeal, water, salted meat, nails—anything that could be stored or carried in them.

We at *Foxfire* had been interested for a long time in finding a master of this trade, but could not locate anyone who was still actively working at it. Finally, Mr. Bill Henry, a member of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild and one of our subscribers, told us of a friend of his in Sneedville, Tennessee who was still making churns, buckets and large wooden tubs. He offered to direct us there and introduce us, and we gratefully accepted. Four of our staff members went to Sneedville and ended up spending an entire day with Alex Stewart—watching, listening, and recording as he made a churn. We found him to be one of the most interesting men we have ever met.

Born and reared on Newman Ridge within sight of his present home, Mr. Stewart grew up watching and learning from his father and grandfather, both of whom had worked with wood all their lives. From them he learned to cut and season his own wood and make all his own tools by hand. The outbuildings on his farm include a small sawmill and a blacksmith shop where he forges the tools he works with. He has power tools as well, but he prefers his own handmade manual and foot-powered tools, feeling that he has better control with them and gets the job done just as quickly.

In the course of the day we spent with Mr. Stewart, we were not only

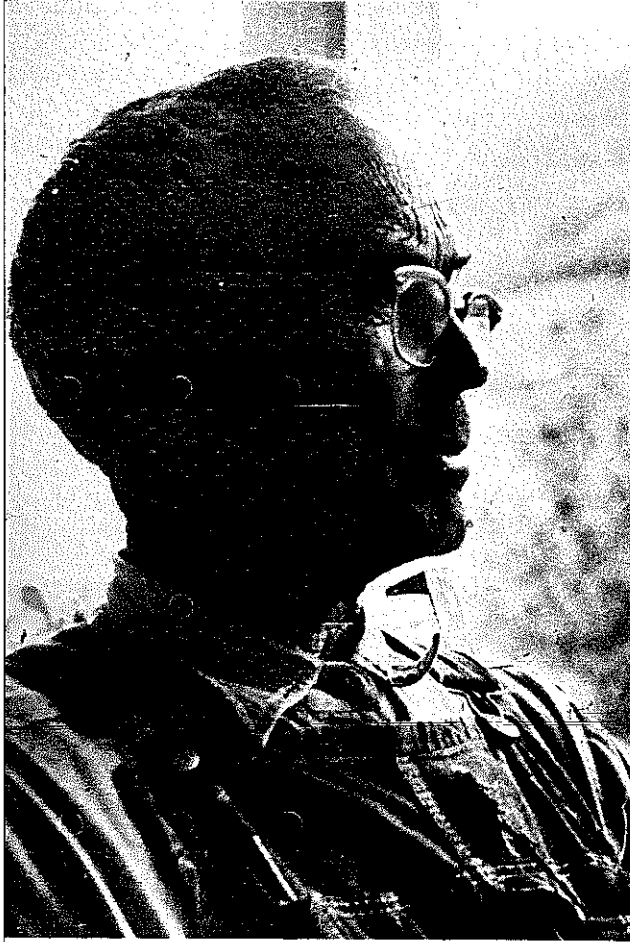


PLATE 329 Alex Stewart



PLATE 330

impressed with his work, but with the things he said. He readily answered all our questions and often made interesting comments of his own.

"I've made all my tools, matter a'fact, ever'thing I got. Well, this [shaving horse] I guess is about fifty years old. I used t'have another'un. It got old, an' I made this'un. If I've got it right, this is th'second one there is in the United States made like this. They's one more like it, and I made it. My grandfather, I learnt this from him. He made ever'thing—wheels, anything could be thought about, he made it, an' I got th'pattern off'a his'n. An' m'daddy—he worked at it as long as he lived. I've been

doin' it since I'uz old enough t'do it . . . about sixty-five or seventy years. When I'uz young, ever'time I'd get a chance, I'uz a'foolin' with it. Yeah, I just delighted in it. Anything that you delight in, it ain't any trouble for you t'do it, but somethin' you don't delight in, it's pretty hard.

"Yeah, I made these tools. I used t'make about anything I wanted to. It's a lot better than stuff you buy. It makes me feel good. I've made many of a churn an' sold it for two dollars. No, not a regret, not in this line [of work]."

Mr. Stewart also displayed a ready humor and often had us smiling or laughing as he worked and talked. One of the most pleasant and touching surprises we had that day occurred at noon when we discovered Mr. Stewart's daughter had prepared a wonderful dinner for all of us. The large table fairly groaned under the weight of all the good food. We ate an incredible amount and then trooped back out to continue our work, well satisfied.

A description of Alex Stewart would not be complete without telling about the workshop where he spends so much time. It is located in the barn which stands behind and to the left of his house. Probably the first thing one notices in walking into the barn is the sight and smell of cedar, stacked in the corner to dry, and lying all over the floor in the form of chips and shavings. Mr. Stewart uses cedar to make his churns, buckets, and other containers because cedar doesn't shrink when drying out after it has been wet. Some people use poplar as it is also easy to work with, but it is apt to shrink after it has been wet if water is not left in it.

On the right-hand wall hang the handmade tools. In their respective places stand the handmade shaving horse, foot-powered lathe, and jointer. Also scattered about are various things he has made—churns, barrels, buckets, piggins, and a big, wooden washtub. It was here that we discovered that he also makes rolling pins, bread boards, brooms, ingenious little wooden puzzles, and many other things. His son, Milum, showed us many of these things and told us about them.

Alex Stewart did indeed become a person for whom we developed a vast amount of respect and admiration as we watched and listened to him, and at the end of the day, when we were forced to say good-by and head back, we all agreed that we came away with much more than the directions for this chapter.

LAURIE BRUNSON

[Ed. note—Since this was written, Alex Stewart has retired and donated all his tools to a museum in Tennessee.]

Photographs by Stan Echols and Gary Warfield.





PLATE 332 Step 1: Cut the cedar in the fall when the sap is down. Stack it up to dry for about six months. When you're ready to make a churn, split the cedar into staves with a stave froe.

PLATE 331 Alex poses with examples of his work: a churn, piggin (foreground), tub, and bucket. The dimensions of the churn follow.
Capacity: approximately five gallons; height: $20\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter of top: $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter of bottom (head): 10 inches; circumference at top: $24\frac{7}{8}$ inches; circumference at bottom (head): 34 inches; average width of staves at top: $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; average width of staves at bottom: $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches; width of hoops: $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length of dasher: 32 inches; dasher crosspieces: 2 inches wide by $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches long; diameter of dasher: 1 inch.

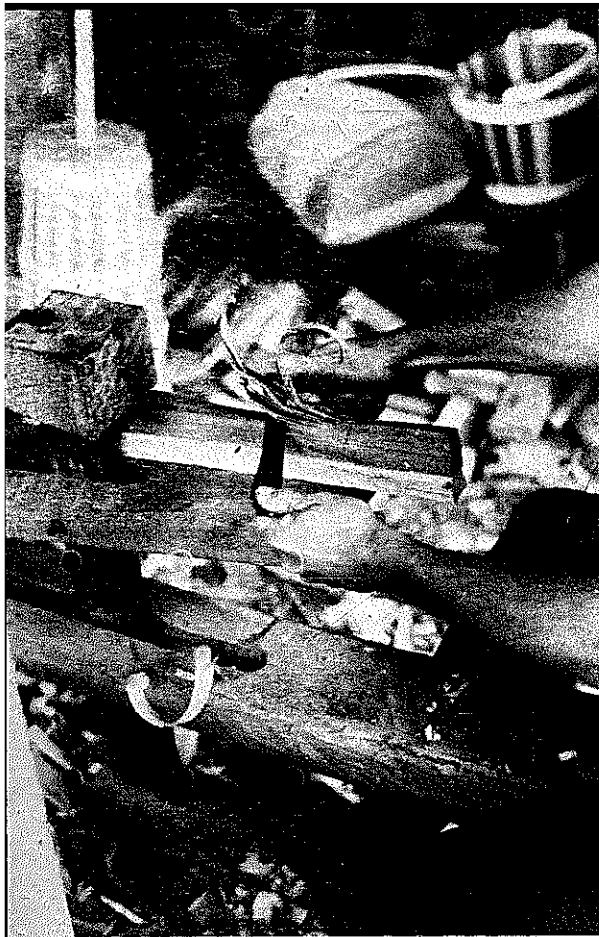
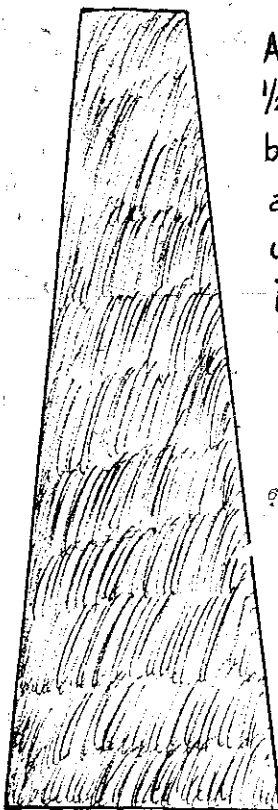


PLATE 333 Step 2: Measure fifteen to twenty staves and saw them off to the same length. The length is decided by the size of the churn needed. (The churn featured in this chapter has staves $20\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. Sixteen staves were used.) Smooth the staves on a shaving horse and start tapering slightly "by guess." All the staves should be tapered so that they are narrower at the top than at the bottom.

Front View of Stave

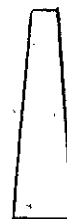


Approximately
 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wider at
bottom than
at top for
churn pictured
in this article

PLATE 334 This churn's sixteen staves had an average width of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the top (no stave was less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, nor more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide) and $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches at the bottom (no stave less than $1\frac{1}{16}$ inch, nor more than $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide). Fitting in the last stave (Step 5, Plate 347) compensates for the inconsistency in stave width.

PLATE 335 Step 3: Shave off the sides of the staves at the top end so the staves will be about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thicker at the bottom end than at the top end. This helps to keep the hoops from sliding down when they are added later.

Side View



$\frac{1}{4}$ "
thicker
at
bottom

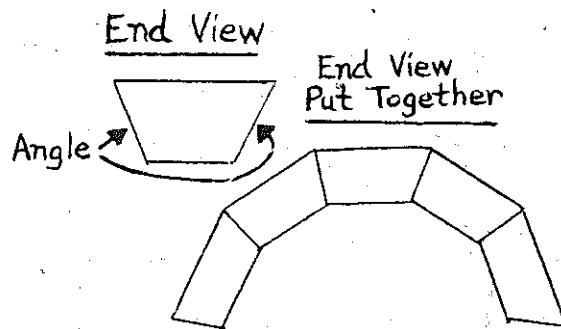


PLATE 336 Decide what the diameter of the head will be (8 inches, 10 inches, 12 inches, etc.). The diameter of the head (which is the bottom of the churn) determines what angle the stave edges must have to fit together correctly.

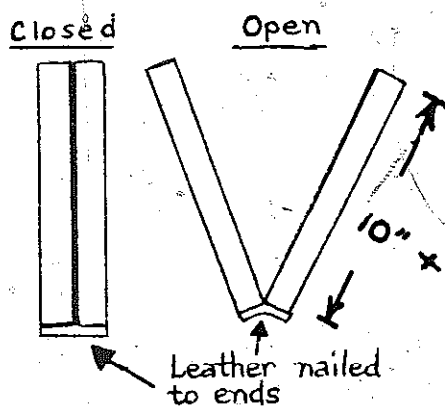
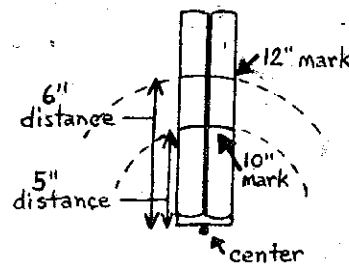
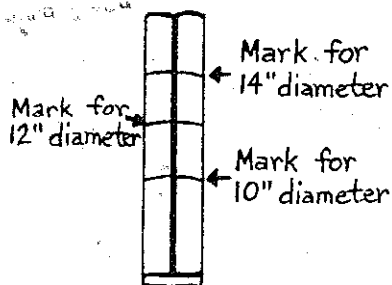


PLATE 337 Mr. Stewart made a gauge to use as an easy guide for angling his stave edges. The gauge is simply two small boards, $10'' \times \frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{3}{4}''$, joined on one end with a leather hinge.

PLATE 338 These two diagrams illustrate how the gauge is marked for various diameters. The placement for the marks on the gauge are determined by measuring off the radius of each desired diameter (using a compass) from the hinged end of the gauge. The hinged end is treated as the center of the proposed circle (head), with the marks on the gauge representing a part of the circumference of that circle.



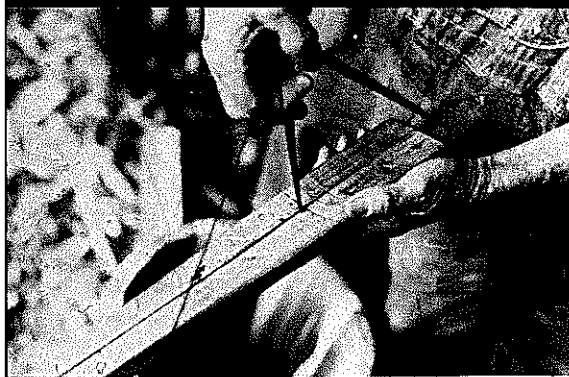


PLATE 339 Alex uses a compass to mark his gauge for different-sized churn heads.



PLATE 340 Using a long-jointer, wood is planed from the edges of each stave until the angled edges fit the gauge.

Checking edge angle of stave
used for churn with 10" head
diameter:

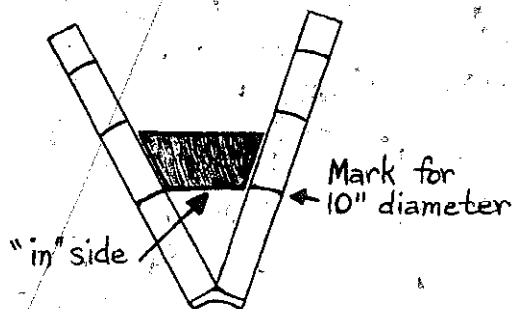


PLATE 341 The angled edges must fit the gauge as illustrated: The "in" side of the stave is the side placed on the mark.

PLATE 342 Alex checks his stave angle on the gauge. The correct angle should be maintained as closely as possible for the full length of the stave. However, the angle does not have to be perfect. The wood, being pliable, seats itself. The last stave to be fitted (Step 5, Plate 347) has to be driven into place. This closes most of the cracks which may result from slight errors in the angles of the other staves.





PLATE 343 Step 4: After staves are tapered and sides angled, Alex prepares to fit them into two temporary hoops.

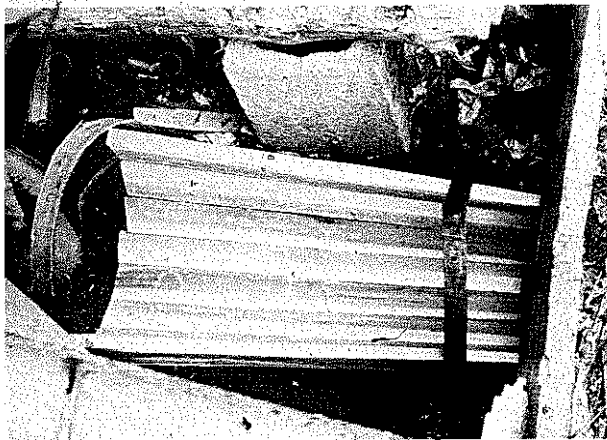


PLATE 344 The large hoop goes around the bottom (head) and the small one around the top. (Alex used a metal-hoop for the top end and an old wooden hoop with a double knot fastening it at the bottom end.)

PLATE 345 Alex pushes a straw-filled bag between the hoops to hold the shape as the staves are added.





PLATE 346 The staves are added carefully.



PLATE 347 Step 5: Use a hammer to fit in the last stave. If it won't fit, adjust the other staves with the jointer. A tight fit is absolutely necessary.

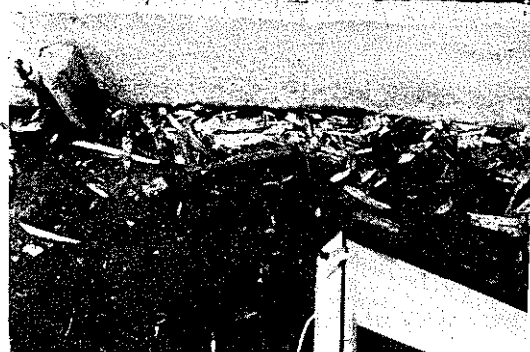




PLATE 348 A chisel can be used as shown to help fit the last stave.



PLATE 349 Step 6: Pull out the bag and hammer the staves until they are even.

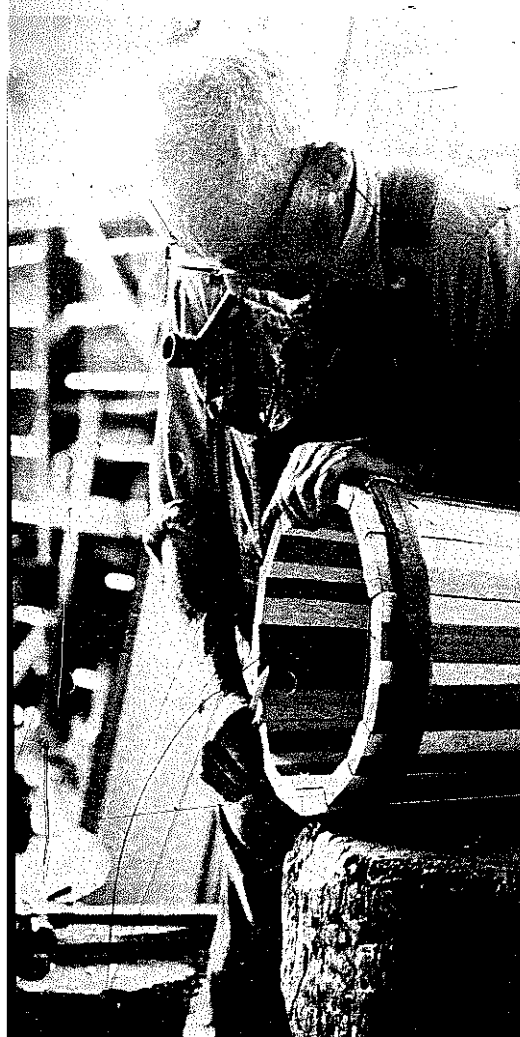


PLATE 350 Trim off uneven edges on the bottom with a pocketknife. Use a hammer to adjust the bands to higher or lower positions (for a better fit).

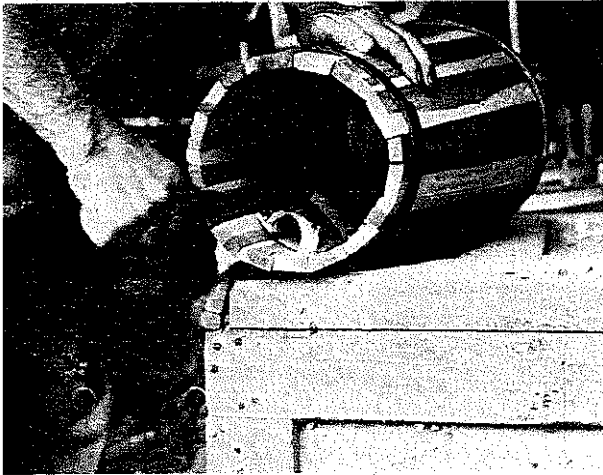


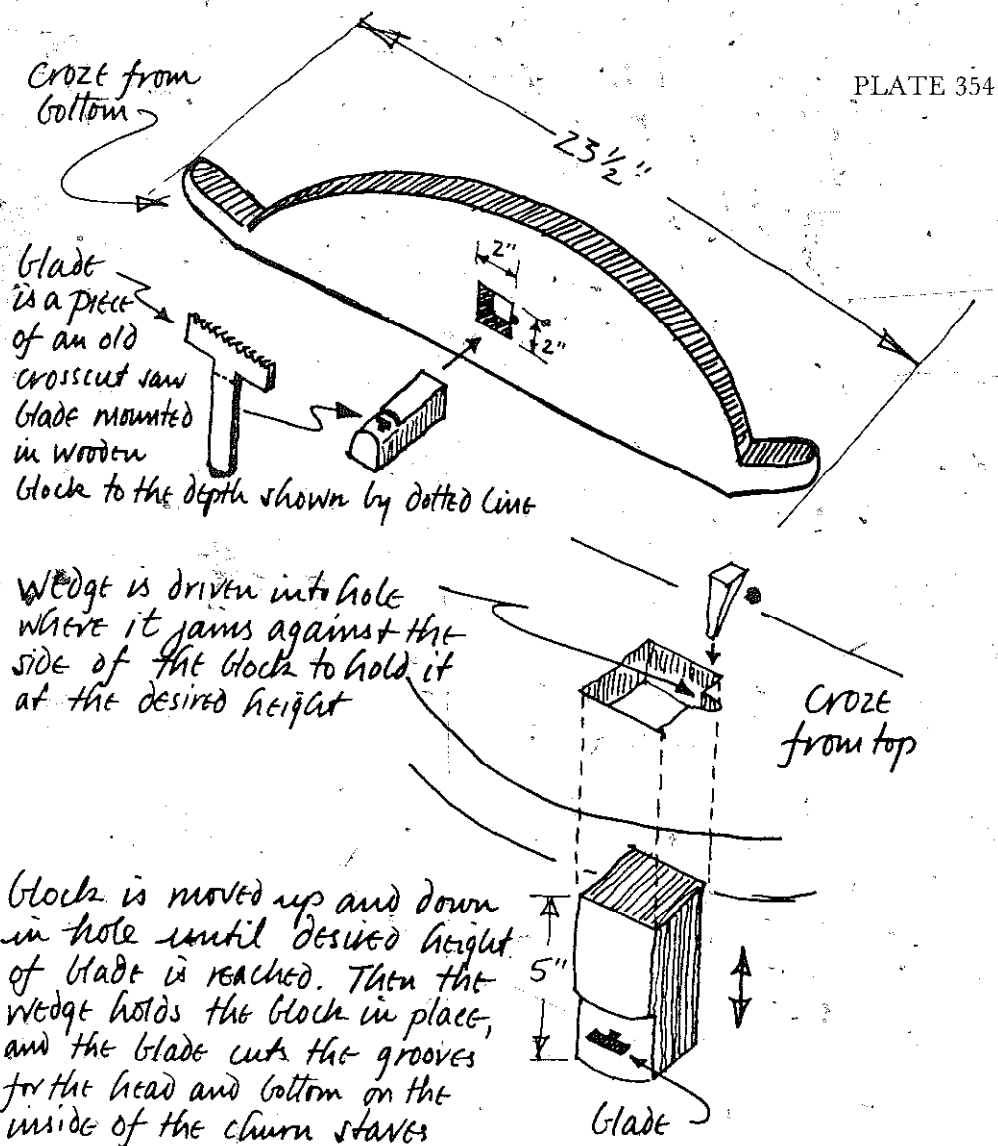
PLATE 351 Step 7: Using a round-shave, smooth (or dress) the inside of the churn. It is especially important to smooth the inside near the bottom end, where the head will be fitted.



PLATE 352 Step 8: Use a rasp to smooth the outer edges of the top and bottom. The churn must sit straight and flat.



PLATE 353. Step 9: Use a croze (Plate 354) to cut a groove for the head to fit in.



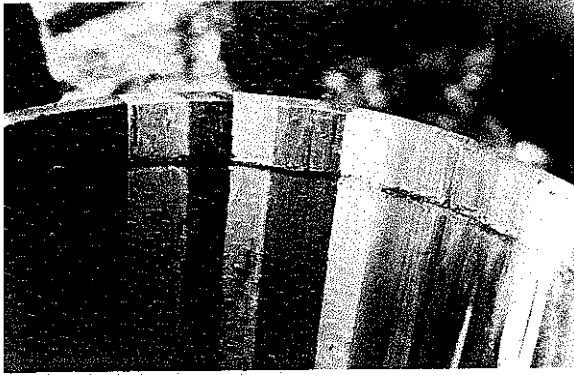


PLATE 355 This groove was cut one inch from the bottom edge of the staves.



PLATE 356 Step 10: Use cedar board(s) for the head (the bottom of the churn). Use any size board and as many pieces of board as needed to make the proper size circle. Use a compass to mark the proper size.

PLATE 357 Cut off the board piece with a handsaw.





PLATE 358 "For this churn, Alex used two pieces of board to make two half-circles.



PLATE 359 Step II: Use a shaving horse and drawing knife to smooth both pieces.

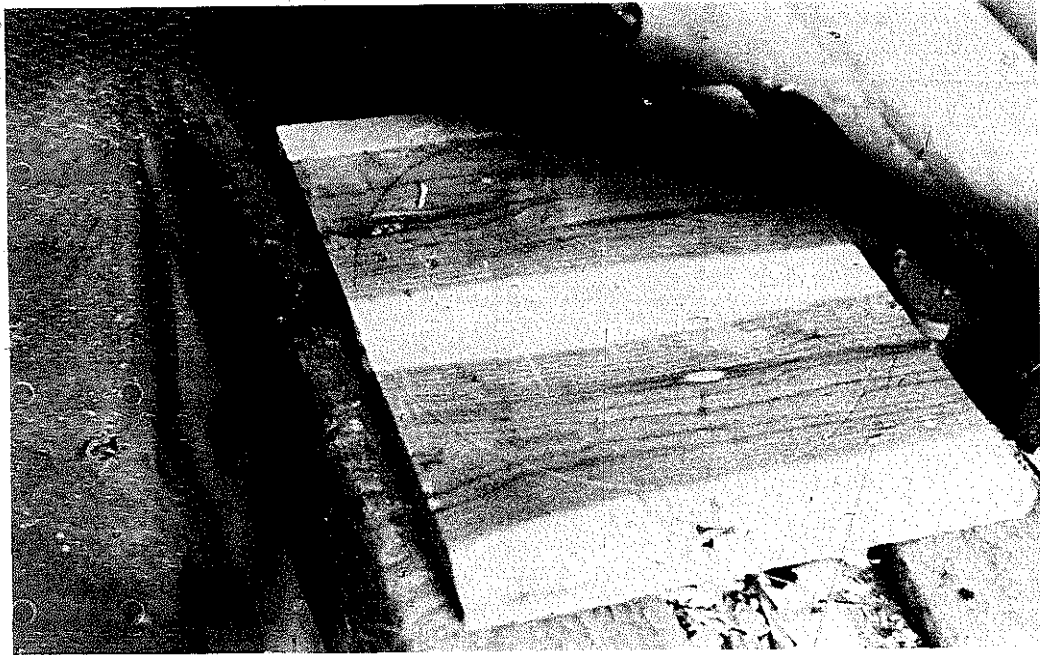


PLATE 360 Remark a half-circle on each piece with a compass.



PLATE 361 Begin to cut the half-circles out with a handsaw. Saw as close to the edge of the half-circle as possible.



PLATE 362 Trim the edges of the half-circle with a pocketknife.

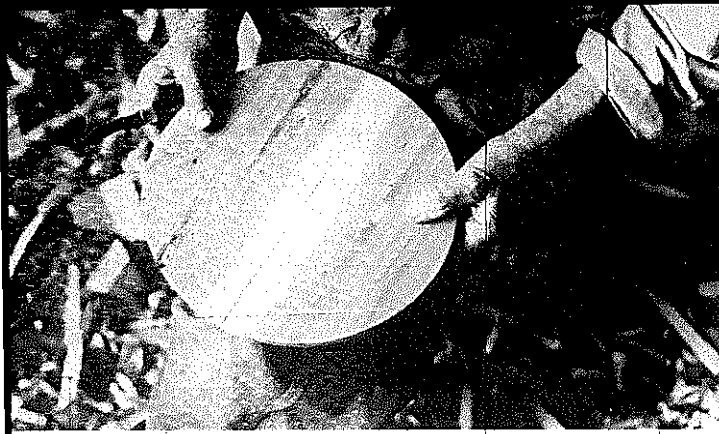


PLATE 363 After trimming, hold the half-circles together and check the smoothness of the circumference.

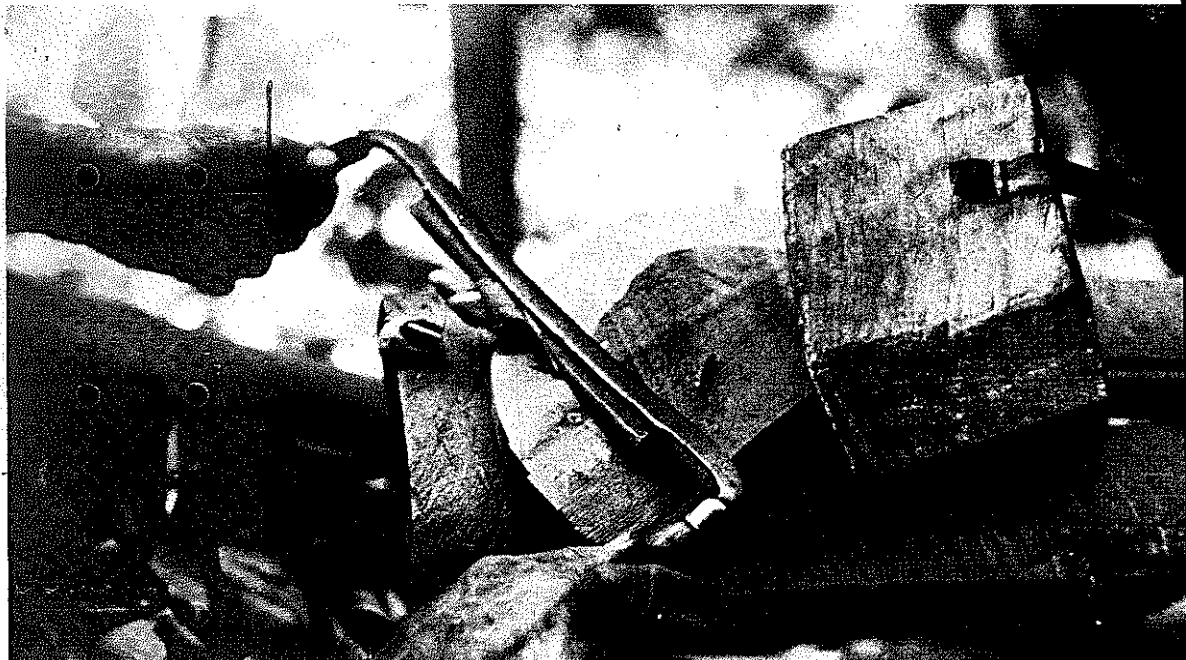


PLATE 364 Step 12: Begin to bevel the edges of the half-circles with a drawing knife.

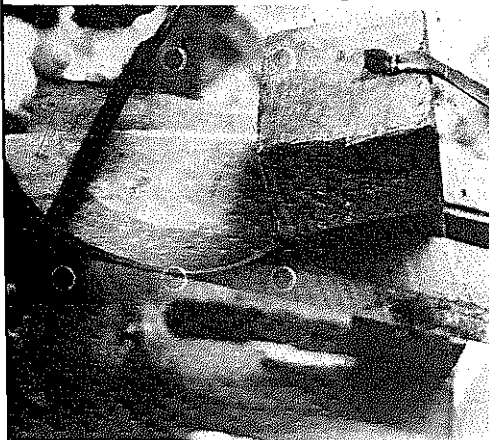


PLATE 365 Finish beveling the edges, and smooth off with a pocketknife.

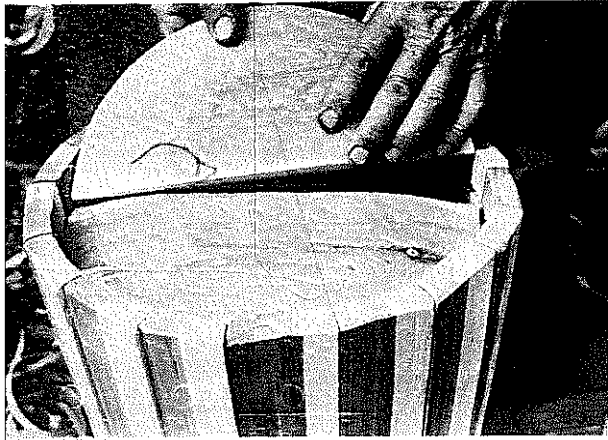


PLATE 366 Step 13: Take the bottom (head) hoop off. Fit the two halves of the head into the groove made by the croze. Put another temporary hoop on that fits in the middle of the churn. (Alex replaced the bottom wooden hoop with a metal middle hoop.)

PLATE 367 With a chisel and hammer, force the middle hoop down as tightly as possible.





PLATE 368 Tap the staves with a hammer to make sure the head is in the groove tightly. Keep tightening the hoop with a chisel and hammer.

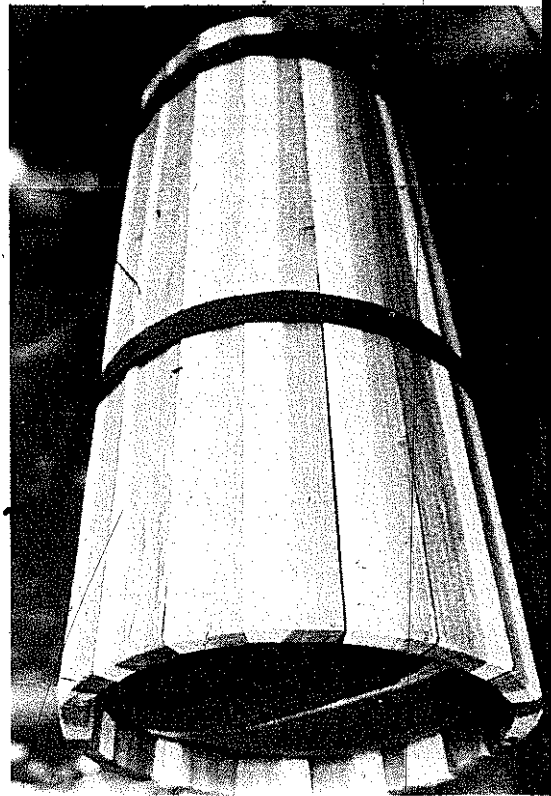


PLATE 369 When the middle hoop is tight, the staves and head should be secure if the churn is lifted.



PLATE 370 Step 14: With the temporary bands still on, smooth outside of the churn with a wood rasp.

PLATE 371 Step 15: To measure for a permanent bottom hoop, take a string and measure the very bottom of the churn.

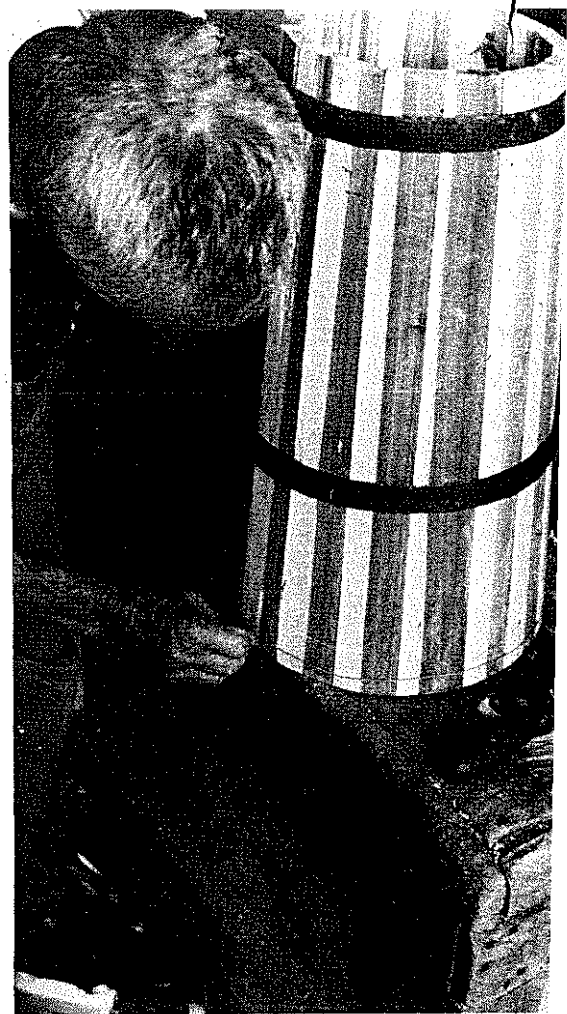




PLATE 372 Step 16: For the hoops, use green white oak. If the oak is dry, soak it overnight. Split the oak into strips using a froe and mallet. Measure the length with string, allowing six extra inches for the notch and lock.

PLATE 373 Step 17: With a drawing knife and shaving horse, smooth the oak pieces to $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide.

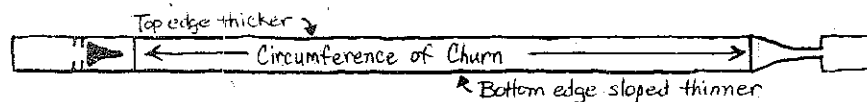
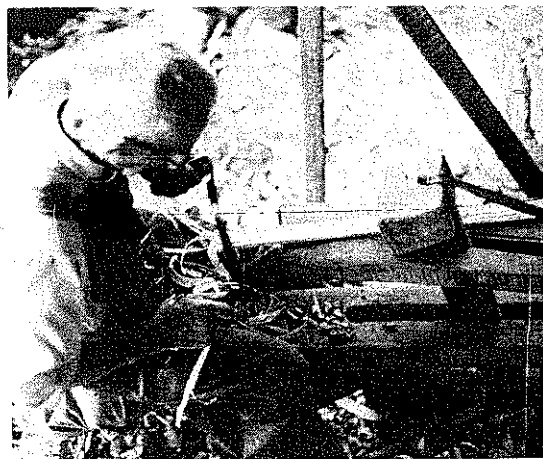


PLATE 374 Mark the length of the circumference of the churn on an oak piece, allowing three extra inches on each end for the lock. The top edge (edge toward the small end of the churn) should be made thicker than the bottom edge for a tighter fit. Use a pocketknife to smooth, if necessary.



PLATE 375 Step 18: Begin to shape one hoop end with a pocketknife; the hoop end is shaved as it is shaped. Each hoop will eventually fit around the churn and the ends will fasten together.



PLATE 376 To create the notch, place the chisel down on the hoop and hammer it through the hoop to make the first hole.

PLATE 377 Make a second hole with the chisel.



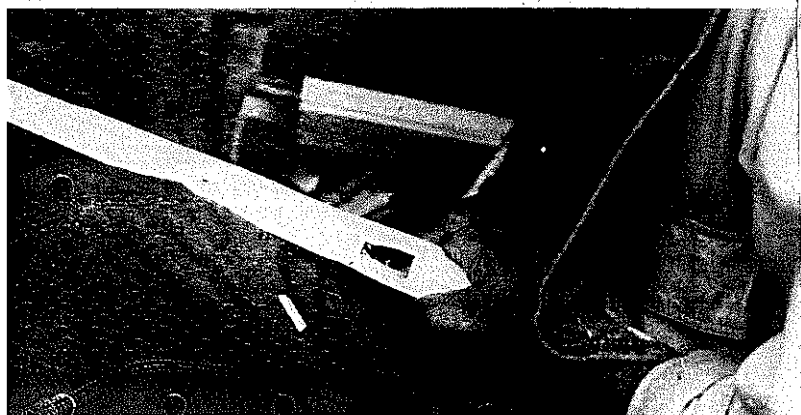


PLATE 378 Using a pocketknife, begin to cut out and shape the notch. Continue to shape the notch as shown.



PLATES 379-381 On the opposite end of the hoop, cut with a knife as shown, until the inner side (*Plate 380*) and the outer side (*Plate 381*) are finished.



PLATE 380

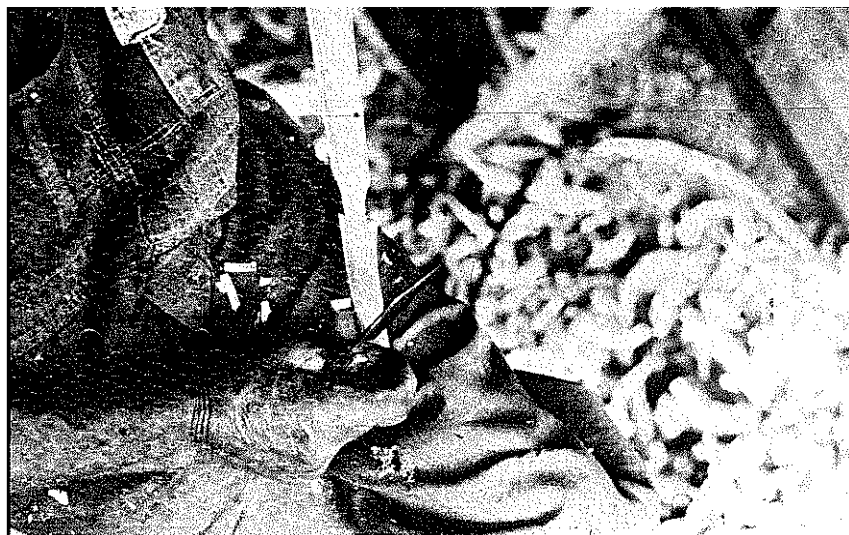
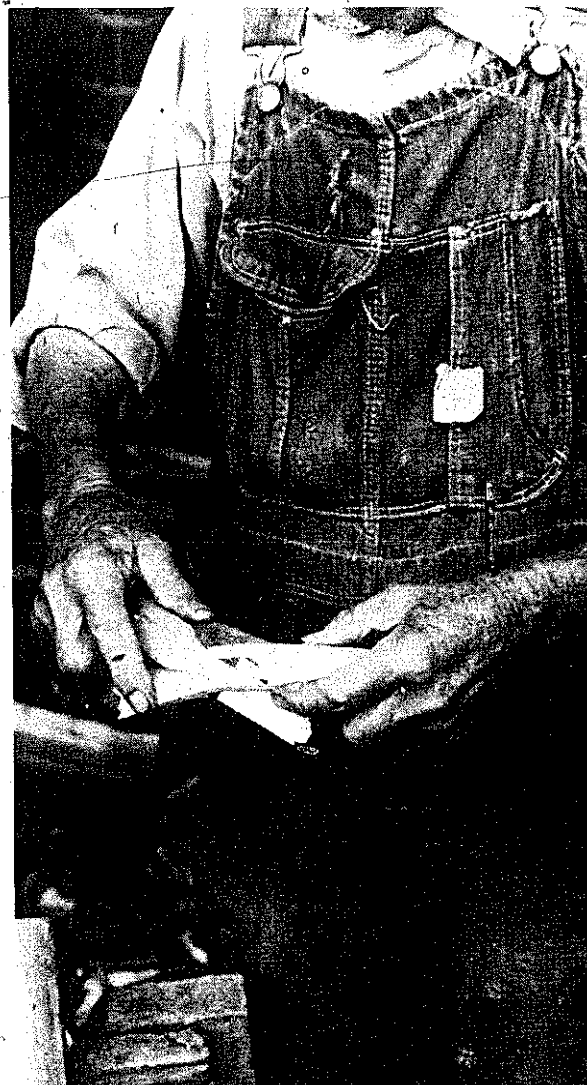


PLATE 381

PLATES 382-383 Step 19: Bend the hoop around your knee to make it curve, and hook the ends of the hoop together (*Plate 383*).

PLATE 383





PLATES 384-385 Trim the edges with a pocketknife (*Plate 384*), and shave the inside of the joint (where the ends come together) with a pocketknife to fit flush with hoop. Finished hoop should appear as shown (*Plate 385*).



PLATE 385

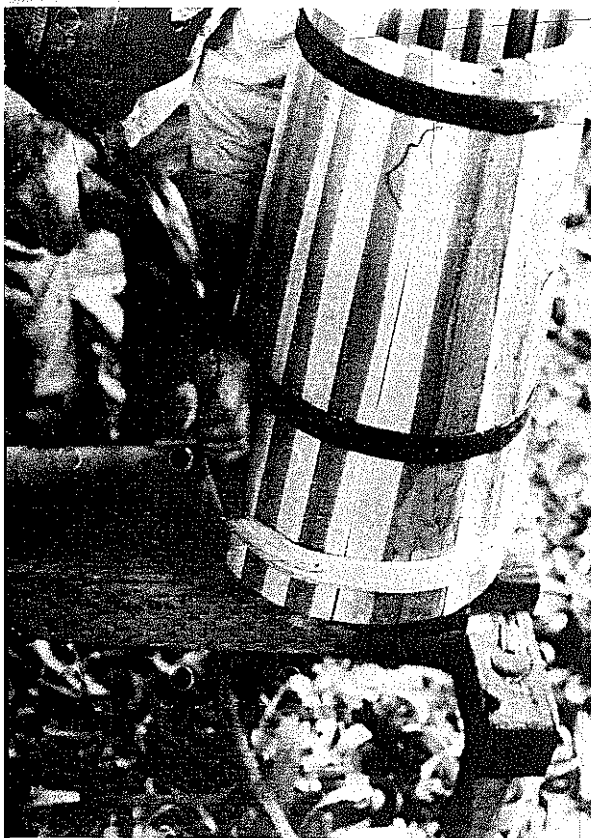


PLATE 386 Step 20: Put the hoop around the churn and force it down to the bottom (head) of the churn with a hammer and stick of wood—keep the thick edge of the hoop up, toward the narrow (top) part of the churn.

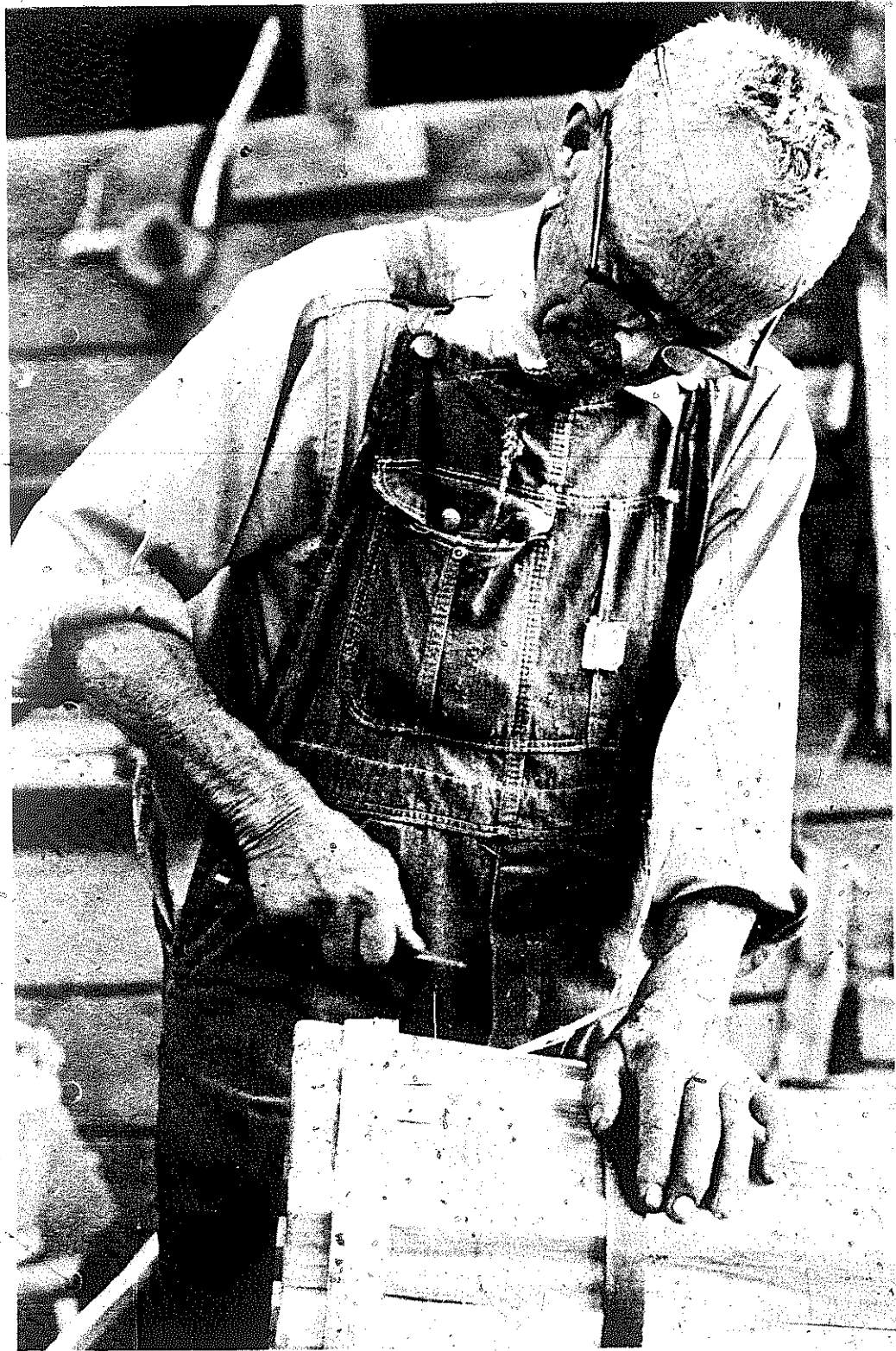


PLATE 387 Step 21: With a pocketknife, trim off some of the thickness of the top side of the hoop. Smooth the outside of the churn with a rasp again.



PLATE 388 Step 22: Add three more hoops, using the same procedure. With a handsaw, cut off the staves at top to even them. Use a rasp to smooth the top and bevel the edge.

PLATE 389 Step 23: For the lid, obtain the circumference using the same procedure as for the head (Plates 356-365). For groove on the underside of the lid, use a handsaw and trim with a pocketknife and rasp. Drill a hole slightly larger than the diameter of the dasher handle in the center.





PLATE 390 The top should fit right on top of the churn, with a hole in the middle that the dasher handle can easily slide through.

PLATE 391 Step 24: For the dasher handle, use oak or maple and turn on a foot-powered lathe (see *Foxfire* 2, p. 164), leaving an extra chunk of thickness toward the bottom to prevent the crosspieces from being forced up the handle.

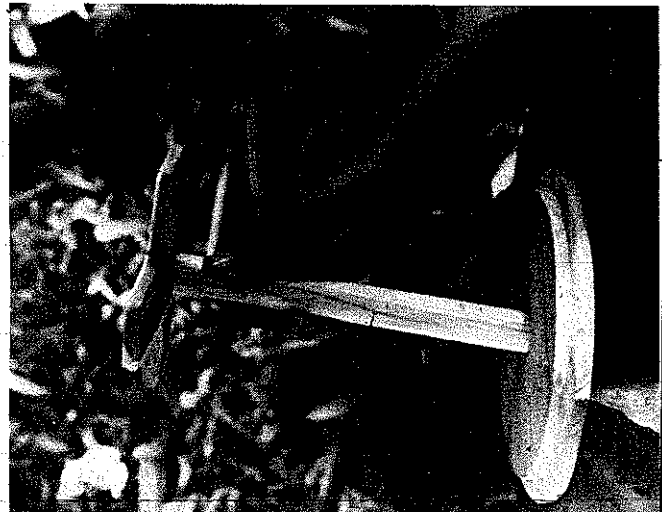


PLATE 392 Use two pieces of cedar for the crosspieces, shaped as shown. Drill a hole in the middle of the crosspieces to fit the stick in. Smooth with a pocketknife and force the crosspieces onto the handle. Small nails or pegs can be driven in the bottom to hold the crosspieces securely to the handle.



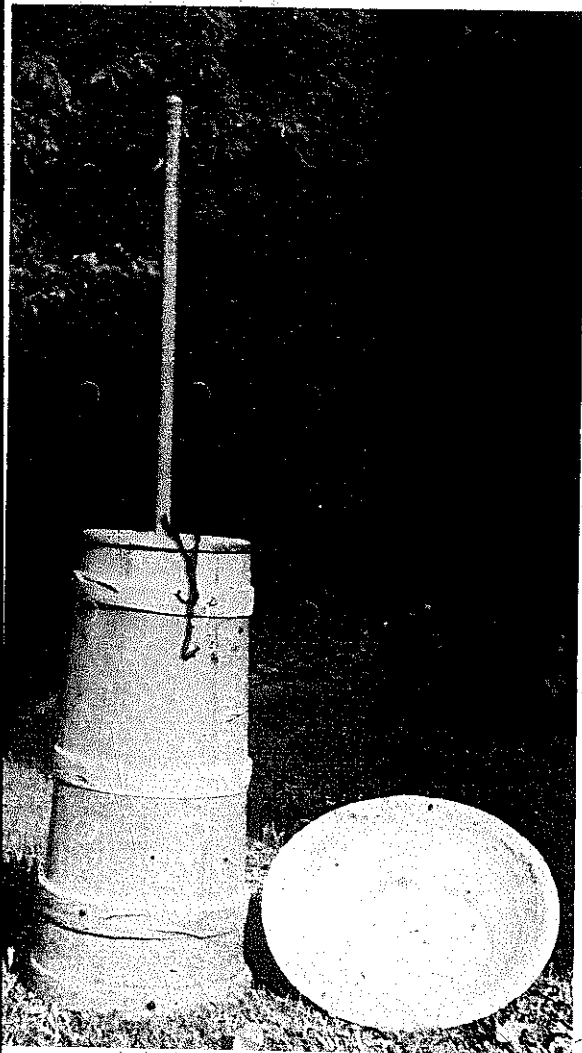


PLATE 393

PLATES 393-396 This 145-year-old churn, passed on to one of our contacts by his grandmother, shows how accurately Alex Stewart has maintained the traditional pattern for his own churns. The difference is that the churn (and the equally old wooden bowl) pictured here are made of yellow poplar—a wood more frequently used than cedar, as it would not affect the taste of the butter in the way cedar might.



PLATE 394

PLATE 396

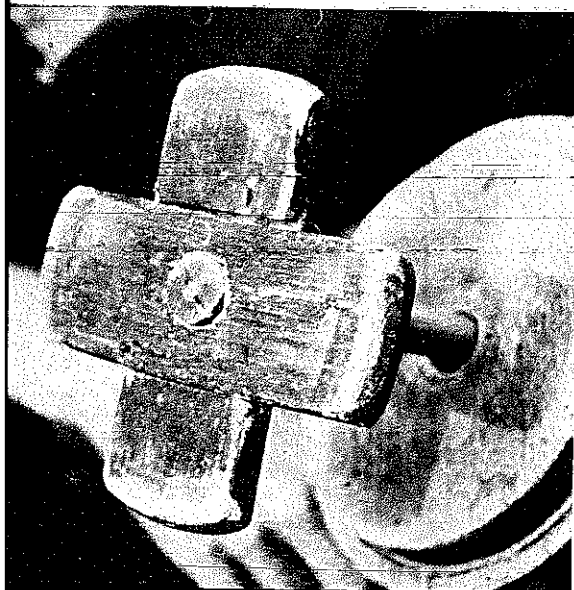


PLATE 395

BEULAH PERRY

Beulah is one of the most beautiful people we have ever met. No matter how she feels, she always gives us a warm smile and makes us feel at home. She is eighty years old, but acts and looks much younger. Her belief in God and the Bible are the main forces in her life. She was brought up in a very religious atmosphere and these qualities shine through.

Born before the turn of the century, Beulah has been through many changes during her life, many of which she'll tell you about. She lived on a farm when she was young and gardening became one of her main interests. She still loves to work in her small vegetable garden behind her house, and in her yard where she has planted lots of flowers and shrubs, many of which she hiked into the mountains to get.

Although she grew up in the South Carolina Piedmont region, and moved around to many different places, she loves this area best. "This is the best and most beautiful part of the country to me, here in the mountains. I love Clayton."

BEVERLY JUSTUS AND VIVIAN BURRELL

This material about Beulah Perry was collected over a period of three years by Jan Brown, Mary Garth, Beverly Justus, and Vivian Burrell.

My grandfather came here from Africa as a slave when he was young. Of course, this was before the Civil War. I don't know what part of Africa [he was from], but he was with a bunch of slaves that came from Africa. They came to Augusta—where the ocean is, where the big ships come in. Down there in some part of South Carolina, the slaves were all brought there and sold in a slave market. He was first a slave in [eastern] South Carolina, somewhere close to where they were brought in.

He couldn't have been too old, because the people that owned him educated him—he was well-educated. I just don't remember [how old he was], because back in those days, people grew old much quicker than they do now. Back when I was a girl, a person fifty years old was considered a very old person and now people seventy and seventy-five years old still work.

It must've been quite a place because he said that he would have to go over all the plantation, that was his biggest job. They would send him and he would have to bring back a report, what every bunch of slaves [was doing], or wherever they were, he would have to bring back a report of what had happened and what they were doing and all.



PLATE 397



PLATE 398

My grandfather said that when they educated him, they called the lady "Miss," and she would take him and give him his lessons every day and she would dare him to tell any of the other slaves anything that he was taught. He wasn't supposed to tell anything. He must have been a very unusual black. Back in those days, she would take him in a room and give him his lessons and she educated him well enough so that he could teach school after he was freed. He could teach school and that was a little unusual. In those days, there weren't many colored people that knew anything about education.

He said he did everything—all of their business and everything. He was the overseer of everything. He had a big horse he would ride, and he went all over the big plantation, from place to place.

I don't think that my grandfather's slave people were very cruel to him. He didn't say anything [about that]. Mostly he said what the slaves would do and that the [slave owners] didn't allow them to have church, or pray and sing—nothing like that. No, [the white people] were bitterly against that. They would punish them for that as quick as they would anything. He just said praying and singing—that was a crime. My grandfather said sometime in the big slave plantations, a bunch of them would get together and they would pray and sing, but they had to be real low.

Seemed like they were more religious than people are now—but I don't know if it was their African religion, or a Christian religion. Did you know back in Africa, they had a religion—I don't know where, don't know what it was, but they had a religion over there.

Some of the slaves were treated awful bad, because my grandfather would talk—I don't know, maybe it was just one of God's plans for somebody to tell a little of both sides. You know, most of the people just tell the bad side of it and the distressing side, but my grandfather had good slavemasters, and he wasn't treated what you'd call bad, like others, because they trusted him and he was educated.

His name was Wartlaw—my mother's father. I don't know too much about my father's parents because my father's slave people didn't educate him, his father nor him. He didn't read and write, and none of them ever taught me any African words.

My grandfather must have been getting on up in age when they freed him, because they gave him seventy-five acres, and I know where the spot of land is. I go by that place most every time I go to Anderson [South Carolina]. I used to hear my mother talk and she said from time to time the different white people around would take a little of Grandpapa's land and maybe another one would come in and would take a little bit, so eventually they just took all of it. [I didn't grow up on that land.] When we learned anything about the property, we were just little kids. Sitting

around on the floor, my grandfather would tell us things just like people'll tell a fairy tale to children. We were all very small, but I can remember lots of things.

I don't know how long [after he was free] that he lived on that land, but I don't think he lived on that place very long, because I remember when I was just a little toddling thing, he had a little store on his little tract of land. His store was a very small place—it wasn't much bigger than this room. I guess I was maybe four or five years old, and my mother would send us to Grandpapa's store to get soap or anything like that. She would give us a tin cup, just like we have now—a tin cup, and she said, "Take this cup and Grandpapa will give you some molasses."

We would take that cup and when we'd get ready to go, Grandpapa would give us that cup about half full of molasses, old black molasses, and we were just little things—we thought we had a fortune.

Some of the things he would tell us—why the poor white people didn't like the colored, black people. Said the white people would do something wrong, and the old master'd make the colored slaves go get this white person and bring him to the old master and they would punish'em for it. That was the biggest way they would have catching the white people that would do anything wrong. It don't seem to me that there was any law or anything. They said that was one of the biggest reasons that white people didn't like colored people. It just kind of grew up as a hatred. The colored people *knew* to go get [the white people who'd displease the master]. They *knew* not to come back without them. Sometimes they'd run'em all day, just like dogs. But they *knew* they better not come back without them.

"Back in those days . . ."

I grew up in the country in Anderson County [South Carolina] about ten to twelve miles from Anderson. I married in 1915.

I guess I must have been about thirteen or fourteen [when we started dating]. We'd sit around home, read the Bible, talk about things done at church, things like that. We didn't run around and make loud noises on Sunday. That was the law. It had to be a real quiet date. There wasn't much to be done—just sit talking and playing. You know, we played like other children do, but not too loud and rough. They were strict about who we dated. Most of the time when we were old enough to date, it would be on Sunday, not any other day. I think we called it courting.

I guess it was pretty rough [when I first got married]. People now

might think it was bad, but we were used to living on a farm, and eating things we raised on the farm. We were taught to raise chickens, hogs and cows, and that's just the way we started out.

The white people that raised my husband gave him a little spot of land. It had one little house on it and they gave that to him and we lived in it. You could lay down at night and look through the loft and see the stars. I remember once one night it snowed and the snow had come through those cracks and the bed and the floor were covered with snow. I waked up my husband and said, "It's rained in here." He made a light and looked, and everywhere in that room—even our bed—had just a little white coat of snow. It had come in the cracks overhead. It was fun to us. We got up and put some sheets up by the side of the walls to keep the snow from coming in. Well, it didn't keep it out but it didn't go all over the house. We did things like that and it was fun to us. I married just before my eighteenth birthday. I married the fifteenth of January, and the twenty-eighth was my birthday.

You know, back in those days when you married, you went to your own home. You didn't stay with your parents. We moved out on that plantation where the white people had raised my husband.

We stayed there for about eight or nine years. Then moved to another plantation—about six or seven miles from that place. We stayed there until we went to Atlanta. I was the mother of four little boys; they all died babies, but one. He lived to be fifteen.

In Atlanta, I did domestic work and housekeeping, and from there came to Clayton. I went to Washington, D.C., after I came to Clayton. I came to Clayton in '25 and I was here about ten to twelve years. My health got bad and Dr. Green advised me to go to Florida or some place other than Clayton, because the climate would be better. I stayed down in Florida seven or eight years and after I got tired of going down there, I went to Washington and stayed up there six or seven years.

I came back to Clayton for good twenty-one years ago. This is the best and most beautiful part of the country to me, here in the mountains. I love Clayton. I think the country people are more friendly than the city people. They're more lovely and they seem like they love each other better; and I always feel like they're more Christian-like in the country than the city people. City people have to work all the time if they have a job. In the country, on a farm, you have rest periods. In the summertime, you get through working your crop and you have a little rest time. From the time you lay your crop by and from the time you have to go back to picking cotton, back on the farm, you have a little rest between that. So I guess that makes it a little better than living in the city.

"That's how crazy we were."

I never will forget. My father and mother were big churchgoers. One day while they were gone, we decided we wanted to go horse-riding. We caught the mules we could catch the easiest (the horses and mules belonged to another person). My brothers got mules, and I got the big black horse. I never will forget that! We got up on blocks and I got up on that horse—and the horse just reared right straight up. I just slid off his back, and I led him back up to a block and got back on him—that's how crazy we were. He commenced prancing around and my brother got that big buggy whip and got behind me and hit the horse as hard as he could—and off we went. They got on their mules right behind me and up the road we went. We couldn't go too far, because we were afraid Papa would come back and see us! Some of those horses and mules were wild—I don't know why some of us didn't get killed. But the Lord was with us.

Papa would go to the woods and catch a possum. He'd catch them at night. He had possum dogs and he'd go and catch 'em and sometimes bring in two or three. In the morning Papa would kill them and put on a big pot of hot water, dip 'em down in that hot water and scrape the hairs off them. It'd come off nicely. Then you take the insides out and parboil them a little bit. I know you've heard about possum and sweet potatoes. When the possum gets about done you take and put some sweet potatoes around it. They're better than squirrel or rabbit—they're very good.

When I was a kid, the possum head was my favorite. Mother would always pay me to do things, and she says, "Now, Beulah, if you do so and so, I'll leave the possum head on." When it got done, she'd cut that head off and give it to me.

"We helped my father with the farming."

We stored our own vegetables. Like leather britches—dry your green beans in the summer—string them, hang them up to dry. We also dried pumpkin, apples; but we always had fresh vegetables in the winter (in western South Carolina)—turnip greens, collards, mustard, and things like that. They grow in the winter here.

Now peas we'd dry—my father'd put about a couple of acres in peas, and we'd go through there with big sacks and pick those peas when they got ripe. We'd pick them maybe every other week, and maybe we'd have this room about half full of peas. Now we didn't have a thrasher, and we'd

put them out on a big sheet, and take sticks, and beat those peas out of the hull. A windy day would take all the little trash out of them. We'd just take 'em out in the yard on a sheet and hold 'em up, and the wind blew through and got 'em clean.

We canned some blackberries and apples, and peaches. We didn't make too much jelly, but we made applesauce. We dried most of the fruit. We had a smokehouse in which we kept all the peas and canned food, and dried food and meat.

My father always made our own syrup. People in the neighborhood would have a mill, maybe the whole neighborhood would have only one, and people from far and near would go to the place and make their syrup. Carry all those loads of cane to the mill!

[We helped my father with the farming.] We didn't have any machinery, just used hoes and mattocks and shovels and plows. We'd get in the garden and clean it off with our hoes and rake up the trash. There was a lot of trash on the ground and we'd pile it up and burn it. That would make beds with a lot of ashes to start tomatoes, cabbages. They called them hot-beds then.

—We took the manure out of the barn and put it in a pen as big as this room. [My father'd] clean out the stalls of the mules, cows, hogs, and chickens. Then he'd go to the woods and get a load of leaves to throw in there. From time to time, he'd mix it up and keep adding to it till it was time to use it. We had big sacks we made into big aprons, and we'd go to the pile and fill up our aprons and go scatter it around the garden. We'd have to carry at least a half a bushel. We had big paling fences around the garden so chickens couldn't fly over them. My daddy made the palings out of a certain kind of pine.

We grew one kind of corn for us and the animals; we didn't have any sweet corn. To harvest the corn we were going to keep over the winter, we waited way late, till after several frosts. That was so the corn would get good and dry. If it didn't, when you gathered it, it would rot. We'd go in and pick the corn and heap it up, and then somebody would come through with a wagon, loading up that corn and carrying it to the barn. Sometimes we'd pile it out in the yard and have a corn shucking with 25-30 men and have a great big dinner. We took the corn to the mill any time after we'd shucked it. My father used to take a half a bushel of corn and have it made into grits. —didn't buy no little packages of grits, —not with so many kids. For seed, we'd pick out good ears to put back.

Now crows would eat up your corn crop if you didn't keep them scared out. We'd make scarecrows and put around the edge of the field—that'd scare 'em out. Sometimes they'd get so bad, people would get out in the edge of the woods and shoot at 'em.

Back when I was a kid, we had big cotton patches to sell. You'd clear off your fields, plow them up, lay off your rows, and put your fertilizer [composted manure] in, and go along with a great big cotton planter. I'd say we'd plant along the middle of April. You'd have a mule pulling your planter, and you could do sometimes four to five acres a day. To get it in, you'd put five or six big baskets, like the one I made for *Foxfire* (see *The Foxfire Book*, pp. 119-27), out in the field, get you a sack and put that on your back and go along and pick cotton. It was ready to pick when those big green cotton bolls would pop open—all that white cotton ready to pick out. We didn't have boll-weevils then. Nothing really bothered the cotton, but some years we'd have a very good crop, some years it wouldn't be very good. When we got it in, we'd put it on a wagon, take it to a gin house and have it ginned, made it into bales, carried it to the market—that was a big time. That was the only way poor people had to make a living.

We grew our wheat and oats—at harvest time you cut your wheat and have a thrasher thrash that wheat out, sack it up, take it to the mill and get your flour. The oats were for the animals.

My grandfather grew tobacco for his own use, a patch about as big as this room. When those leaves began to turn—now that was his job, we couldn't do that—he'd go through the field, when those bottom leaves began to turn, he was very careful, and he picked one off at a time and put them in a basket, and he'd go over his little patch two to three times a week. He'd take those big tobacco leaves, tie a bunch together, take them and hang'em up in the barn so they'd get good and dry. He'd put'em where we couldn't get to them. It was hard to grow—seems like every three to four days checking those leaves looking for worms. I always wanted to work with him in his tobacco, but no, that was apart. When he got ready to twist his tobacco, he would make a sweetened water with homemade syrup, and he'd put a big wagon sheet down, put his nice leaves down on that sheet, and take that sweetened water and sprinkle it on the tobacco. When it got pretty damp, why he'd twist it. He'd keep on until he got it done. Some parts he'd have for chewing, and some for smoking. I'm pretty sure he saved his seed. Some people had big old tobacco patches—they didn't sell it—they made their tobacco, and they divided it with people who didn't have any.

We raised great big turnips. People don't raise turnips like they did then—old people had great large turnips back then—and they had'em all the winter. Lot of times, they'd have t'plow those old turnips up and push them aside to plant again in the spring. And my father went to the field with a big basket [to gather the cast-aside turnips] and we'd put on pots of them to cook for the hogs.

Seems to me like the vegetables were better then. I don't know whether it was because we cooked them with so much meat. You know people don't season things much any more now.

You take people that use stable manure for their garden—I think that makes a difference in the flavor of the food; it grows off better. Now I garden with store-bought fertilizer, and I don't like it either. I can't get a good garden—a pretty garden like I want to. I think about back when I was a kid and my father used t'have those pretty gardens. Stable manure is really good for a garden.

[On the farm, the mules were very important] because that's what my daddy used to make his crop with—they would have been our most valuable thing. He used them for hauling wood, getting back and forth to the market. That was the biggest way people had of getting around—a mule and wagon.

About the house—my mother's garden, her milking and her churning, and fixing her butter and milk took most of her time. She took care of the garden most of the time. Of course, Papa would do the plowing, but the rest was her job.

I don't think my father ever did anything but just farming and he also learned to make baskets and to bottom chairs; he made fish baskets and things like that. [A lot of people use those fish baskets], particularly people that liked to fish and had ways to get out to the rivers and big creeks. So many people didn't have convenience to get out to places like that; my father had his one-horse wagon. He could go a long distance. I remember once we were on the big creek, on the plantation that we worked, and a creek then was about like a river now, and my father would take small baskets like that and put in those deep places in that creek. Sometimes we'd be in the bottom land working, sometimes we'd go with my father, and see him take that basket out and get the fish out.

I never will forget once we went with him and Papa took out one or two eels. They were long and I thought that was something terrible. They looked just like snakes. My father just took them out like they were fish. Of course you have to use a little more pain and patience; I don't know whether they'd bite or not.

Back when I was a child, we didn't know too much about buying things. Everybody had about the same things—some people weren't as lucky as others. The biggest thing we had t'buy were clothes, and my mother mostly made those. She taught us to sew. I'd sew for most of the other little girls around in the community. As I grew older, I was the dressmaker. I really enjoyed that, and I like to sew yet . . . when I have the time.

Once in a while we would buy flour—we never had enough wheat to do from one wheat season to the next. Maybe a little meal—sometimes we



PLATE 399

wouldn't have enough corn to last till the next crop-gathering. We had to buy salt, and once in a while sugar—not too much because we made syrup, and that syrup in the winter would go to sugar stored in a big barrel. We raised our own spices and teas—sage, catnip, boneset, and some other things.

Most of the time, Papa would swap things he had—eggs and chickens—sometimes he'd go to town in the wagon and load up different things we had, cabbage or corn or tomatoes, or whatever and go to town on Saturdays and sell those things. Sometimes we'd have milk and butter to send, just anything we could spare.

My father was a busy man—he had to be!

Back when I came up, people didn't sell things; they gave to each other. Now my father always had two-three milk cows, and Mother would churn, and she'd give some of us kids a bucket of milk and some butter, and she'd send us across the field, or up the road to take Mrs. So-and-So some butter and milk. We churned every day.

We lived out in the country, close to a spring, and my father would put a big box in the spring. He would make holes in that box for the water

t'run through. And we would take the buttermilk and sweetmilk down and put it in that box and [the cold water] kept it fresh. It was churned every day and put to keep in that spring.

You know, [giving away farm products] was the way most poor people paid their doctor bills. When the doctor would come, my father would catch him three or four chickens, or give him a bag of corn; just put it on his buggy.

In my young days, people didn't have money to hire anything done. If we wanted to do something for one of our neighbors, we just had to go and do it; we didn't have money to hire things done. Say if some of our people in the community got sick and got behind with their crops, why the people in the neighborhood, sometimes maybe as far as from here to Mountain City, would just come in with their wagons and tools and work that crop out maybe in a day. That's the way they done things. Women would come in, wash and clean up the house and things like that, and maybe one bunch would come in a day or two and do things, and for the next two or three days, another bunch would come in. There wasn't no money, nobody paying, because people didn't have anything to pay with, only the little things they made out of their crops and gardens. They would divide.

We lived in one settlement where we had two families of German people. I was very small. I can just remember that. They didn't have things like lots of people. I can't understand it. It might have been because they hadn't been in this country long. I don't remember very many German people from back when I was a child. Those two families were our very close neighbors and he could mend shoes, and he taught me how to mend shoes. I'd go carry milk and things, and he would be mending shoes and he would show me how. I can mend shoes today.

"We were all raised out in the country."

It's so different now from what it was then. Well, we had our house chores to do; we had just about everything to do—a little bit of everything. When my mother passed away, why we just had to take over. There were nine of us children, and I was the second girl. We just had to be a mother and do everything around the house that had to be done, and take care of those small children. My father—he worked every day. When we got to be ten or twelve years old, we would go to the fields. After I got big enough, I worked right along with the boys. We usually had to do about everything we could do; I don't think we had any choice.

I didn't like picking cotton; I don't know what it was about it. It was different. I had it to do and a lot of it, but I never did like to do it. My father had a great big, three horse farm—something like that. We had between twelve and fifteen bales of cotton a year.

We picked it in the field and my father would put it on the wagon, carry it to the gin house and it'd be made up in large bales.

Once in a while on Sunday evenings, some of the neighbors' children would come in and play. People didn't let the children go just any place and play in those days. They picked places they thought where nice people were for their children to go. We would go to homes like that and play a while with the children on Sunday evenings after church and Sunday School. Once in a while the children would come and visit us on Sunday. That was about all the visiting we did. We walked and we'd go to church. Our churches were usually a long way off and Papa would put us in the wagon—two horse wagon—and have straw in the wagon and all of us kids would sit down in that straw to go to church.

We were all raised out in the country—I think the happiest days I had in my life were along then because I imagine we didn't know anything else. We didn't have any movies or anything to go to. We didn't know anything about buying clothes. We were raised in a good, old-time Christian home. What our parents said was right—there wasn't anything else said about it.

Now my parents would sit and spend the evening, the night, and read the Bible to us. And my father would have a prayer every night, and most of the time in the mornings—'round the table. Sometimes my father would have to get up early and leave before we were up, and my mother taught me and my older sister to pray. She would say, "Now you all got to pray this morning. Your papa had to leave early." And we didn't know anything about praying, and Mama said, "Well, you'll have to learn. Don't you know how it's done? You know how to ask me and your father for things."

We said, "Yes, ma'am."

And she said, "Well, that's just the way you talk to the Lord."

You know a lot of people are blaming the young folks for a lot of things, like losing interest in the Bible and church life. Well, I don't. I'll be different. I believe we older people, people who have children, are responsible for part of it. They just haven't taken the time, and you know, it takes time. People have got to have a lot of patience with children. We didn't go to bed without having that prayer. We'd go to the table in the morning—we had a great big country dining room, with a big bench. It would seat about six of us on one bench, and we would have the morning prayer. Then we would eat. Rainy days, maybe, we'd have a little leisure and Mother would get the Bible down and read it to us. Nowadays people

don't have time. Or they don't make time. Back when I was a girl, people's mothers and fathers worked at home—they didn't go out and work. It was on the farm, around the house.

My parents were very good to their children, very strict, so much different from now. You would say the children now are bad, if you compared them to the way children were when I came along. Once in a while we would get good spankings.

Maybe they would tell us to do something and we wouldn't do it right. They would tell us, "Now you go back and do that again and do it right." My mother particularly would say, "Now if you have to do this over, you are going to get a switching." And sometime, we would be careless and think we were going to get by—things like children do now, and we didn't do it just like she wanted it done. We'd get a spanking; she'd make us do it over again and then we'd do it right the next time.

I would advise the young people to just be sweet children, honor their mother and dad, go to church and Sunday School and by all means go by that blessed Bible. Then you won't make a mistake. Just try to do right. You know if you want to do right and try to do right, you've got lots of help, our heavenly Father standing there waiting with a mending, helping hand—He's right there to help. [Young people today are different from the way we were] and my heart goes out for the youths. I just live with them in my mind; I love young people and so many people now don't give the young people credit for lots of their goodness.

I take up for the young folks. Of course, I know some of them are very naughty, but I can't help but feel that the parents have to take some of the blame. And we live in a different age now and we can't expect it now to be like it was back when I was a girl. That's a great big space. My time is passed, and it's the young people's time, and all we can do—anything we can do—we ought to help them and do it with them. The Bible says Christian people have to become as little children. I feel that way, and we have a lot of fun here when I have the little children in the neighborhood come over. We have a lot of fun here.

My people went more on the Bible times, you know. We'd go to church and hear the preacher and read our Bibles. Now we don't keep up with it like they did; they read it and went by that Bible.

One of the greatest things I remember and it stays with me today was when we were small children, our father used to gather up things and go to Anderson to sell at the market—he'd carry chickens and watermelons and eggs, just whatever he had. He'd get a nice little load and in blackberry time, he would say, "Now you children, you go pick some blackberries. I'm going to town tomorrow and you can make you a little money." We'd get out and pick our blackberries. When we had the buckets just barely full, we



PLATE 400

thought we had enough. When he'd get through shaking the berries down in the buckets, they'd lack that much being full, and we'd say, "Papa, we had the bucket full."

And Papa would say, "No, you didn't."

Papa said, "The Bible says, 'Give full measure, shake down and run over.' You haven't done that. Now you've got to put more in there until that bucket runs over."

So that's just how strict they were. We might get out playing or something, and cheat each other, but that wasn't the way they wanted it done.

It's so different from now—back when I was a girl. I wouldn't hardly know how to start telling you, it's just that much different. We read the Bible and we tried to go by that. My mother would say (when we were out playing and something didn't go right), "That wasn't your Sunday School

BEULAH PERRY

lesson. You know the preacher said this or that yesterday (or Sunday). That's what you go to church for—to learn."

That was the way they chastised us.

I think the parents are partly the blame for the problems so many young people have. The reason I say that is that I don't ever think I would have been as good a girl as I tried to be when I was grown, if I hadn't been taught that when I was a girl. Parents took a lot of time with their children. It wasn't just once in a while—on rainy days or at night-time or in the morning, my parents would read a little Bible scripture, or they'd tell us about something that was said in Sunday School. That's just part of young people's lives and that's the reason I love the young people. I can look back and see where parents have failed; they haven't taken the time that maybe my parents or some other parents did. Most of these people now just say, "Well, go ahead, I don't want to be bothered." They didn't say that when I came along. They had time.

I do know people were happier then than they are now. Back in those days, maybe people didn't have so many different things to go to. Back when I was a child we went to school, and church and Sunday School. Didn't do too much visiting; children didn't do much visiting, just once in a while. But we were happy. I look at the children now; they don't seem to have any happy days like we had. I don't know why, but I think sometimes maybe they have too much.

We didn't have the privilege of getting everything we wanted like children do now. A dime's worth of candy would be that big around. And my father'd come home, and sometimes he'd give us half a stick of candy. There were nine of us children. He hardly ever had enough to give us a whole stick, but he'd divide that. We were much more pleased with that than the children are now with fifteen cents' worth. He'd go to town in the winter and buy apples, and take a whole apple and quarter it. That's about all we would get. That would kind of pay us off for something!

We didn't have entertainment as people think of it today. We went to church, Sunday School, and we were just satisfied around the house. And we would have our little handmade dolls—our mother'd make 'em, or maybe one of the neighbors would say, "Now if you'll be a good girl, I'll make you a doll," and make us a big rag doll, stuff it with cotton. And that would be our doll.

We'd get out in the yard and take sticks and make doll houses and things like that, and we made mud pies. That was the way we passed the time.

We didn't know anything but eating what we raised, and once in a while, Papa would go to town and get something. Mother would go to town and get material to make our clothes. We didn't know too much about buying things.

"Me and money, we're so far apart."

The world has changed so from my young child days and from the Bible days, you don't know hardly how to say what's the cause of this and what's the cause of that, but we do know all wrong things.

You know, to my little judgment, when you see all those great people [in the government] that's so far ahead of me and know so much more than I do, and have had so much experience, and making *such* great mistakes—as they're making now, you wonder. You can't help but think it's sin—the cause of it. Sin is the cause of a lot of bad things today and there are some people that don't know and don't understand. What we don't know, the Lord don't require that of us, because He's so wise and all of His creations, He knows in our hearts, He knows what we think and what we know right, we're to do right.

Seems like our country now is more for money, regardless of how it comes or how it goes, or who suffers, who lives or who dies. Seems like money, the big people are just for the money, regardless of how they have to get it, because most of our trouble now is with the big people and the money-making people. All the money being taken from each other is the big talks taking money from each other. Well, the Bible says, "Money is the root of all evil."

Me and money, we're so far apart. I like to make it and I like to have it, but just following after money like I see some people do, that's the least thing I think about.

I know I never will forget, I have worked with people and when pay-day would come, seem like I would forget and they would say to me, "Beulah sure don't care nothing about money. You just walked right out and left your check or money. You sure don't care nothing about it."

And it's the truth. I like it and I need it. I just don't know if I knew I was going to get it or what, you know; some people just money, money, but I never did think of it that way.

It's a strange thing to say. I've got an old Bible here. When we went from the country to Atlanta and the second job I got in Atlanta, I worked for Ku-Klux-Klansmen who ran a dairy farm about four or five miles out of Atlanta. They were the nicest people. My little boy was a baby about six or seven months old and I could get in a street car every morning to that job and I got a Bible—that old Bible—and I love it better than anything. When I hear people talking about Ku-Kluxes, the first thing I think about is, "Well, they must not have been as bad as people said, because my first Christmas gift that I got in Atlanta was this Bible and they gave it to me." They were the nicest young people and they had two little children. They were the nicest, sweetest people to me. I wish I knew where some of

them were now. There must have been some good somewhere because they treated me and my baby just the same as one of the family.

"We have so much to be thankful for."

~~There's one thing I want to do. I want to go to Africa and go on a~~ foreign mission field. I've been wanting to do that ever since I was thirteen. My father had an uncle and he sold his plantation and took his family, and they all went to Africa. Back in those days, I reckon you had to go by ship. There weren't any planes.

When Uncle Joe and his family went, I wanted to go. I asked one of his daughters who was much older than I. Uncle Joe said, no, that it would break my father's heart if I was to do that. He told me to keep studying my Bible and maybe someday the mission or the church might send me. He said, "We're going to pray that you might come see us some time."

I've been wanting to go ever since. At my age now, sometimes it comes to me that I'm going to see some part of the foreign mission. I've seen and studied so much about it.

You know, we didn't know too much about the people coming from Africa—the colored people. It was the mission work they were doing and it seemed like the people there needed mission studies so much more than we here needed them. That was my thing that I wanted to do—to go there. I used to tell people that I've always been a missionary. I don't know why I want to go to Africa or another foreign country, because I've been a missionary all of my life [right where I'm living].

The religion's the only part of my life that stays with me today. My Bible, teaching and training from back as far as I can remember—that's the sweetest part of my life. The Bible is our guide. We wouldn't know how to serve the Lord if we didn't know a little about the Bible. It's through God we have all of our enjoyments, all of our good things. It's through Him that we get it—we know that's for sure. We see some of His handwork every time we look out and see something because He made everything on the earth and He is the Creator of all the beauties everywhere.

The first thing when I get up of a morning that I want to do is get to a ~~door~~ or window and look out and I stand there and look, and thank the Lord for being able to see that beauty one more time. It's a wonderful thing to try to live a Christian life and to love the Lord. We have so much to be thankful for.

APPLE BUTTER

I've eaten apple butter all my life. Both my grandmother and mother have made it, but I had never seen it made in a brass kettle until I went to Rogersville, Tennessee. We were very lucky to find Mr. and Mrs. Pat Brooks, their family and grandchildren, who still make it the old-time way.

"Back years ago, you either made it or you didn't eat it. This day and time everybody has got enough money. They don't have to work like us poor folks. Nobody wants to take the time to make it, but they've all got their hand out for a jar."

Pat was humorous and fun to be with. "Well, Honey, I'm going to tell you something. My daddy was this way [humorous] and I ain't never seen a stranger in my life. Just enjoy your life, for when you're dead, you can't."

Obviously he lives by his word. "I have fun everywhere I go. That's what we're here for."

I remember when I was left in charge of the tape recorder, Pat asked me, "You got your tape recorder on? You want to give me some sugar!" Pat just naturally does things like that.

As we were pouring the apple sauce into the brass kettle to cook, he told us about a trick he pulled on his wife. "Now I've got to tell you about my wife when she put on her first pair of shorts. She came outside and when she did, I just wheeled my chair around in front of the door. Here come these people down the road in a car. She was just jerking me trying to get in the house, so in order for them to see her [wearing shorts], I just screamed and hollered like I was dying, so they would look. And she said, 'I'll never put the dern things on again, I bet you.'"

We were taking turns at stirring the apple butter when he brought out

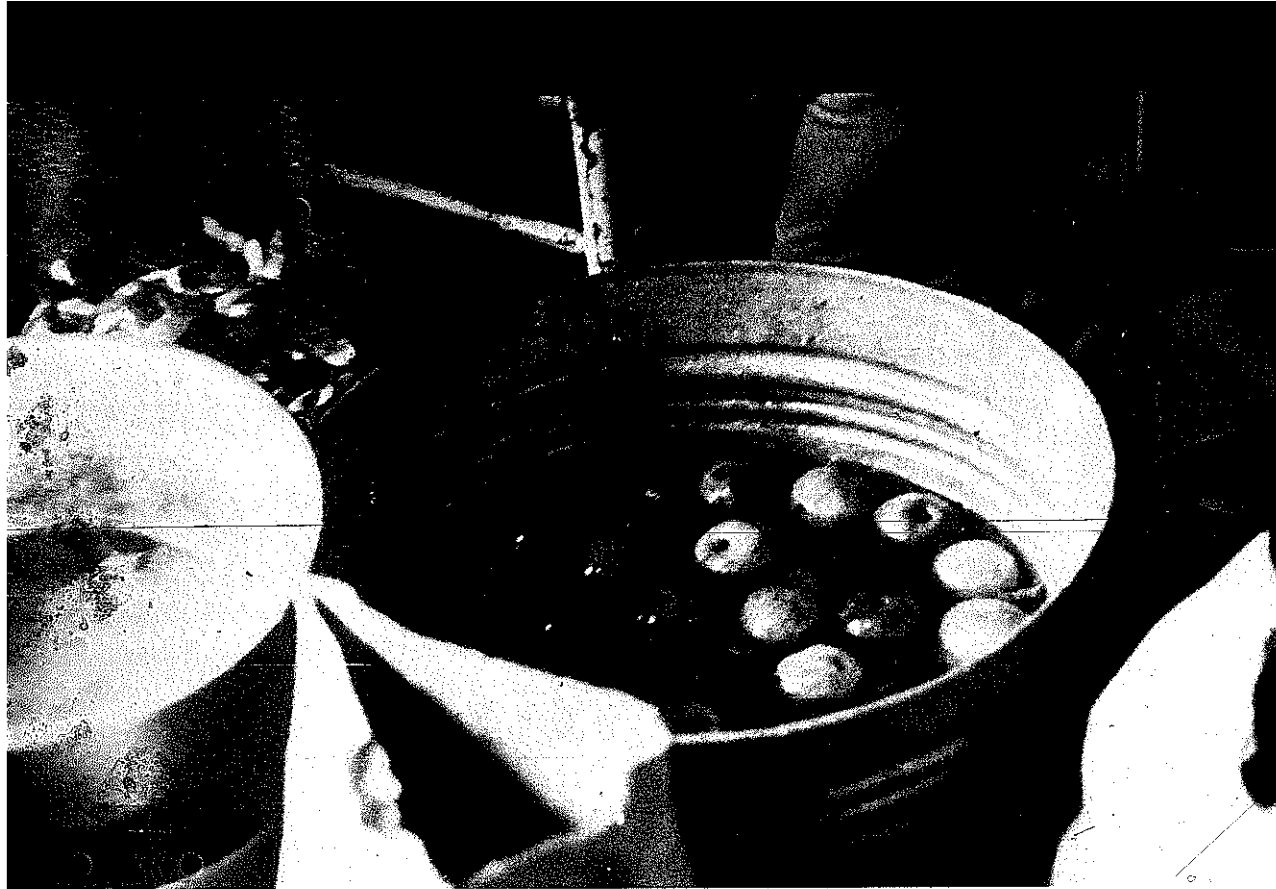


PLATE 401 The apples must first be washed and peeled.

a rolling pin that belonged to his grandmother. "I'd like to sell this rolling pin. We're going to have a little auction. What do you bid?"

Bids started at five cents and ended with \$4.75.

... going once, going twice, gone—sold to Laurie.

Later he told his wife, "We had a sale here a while ago—a rolling pin. I got three neck hugs, four squeezes and nine kisses with it."

After the first stir came off the fire, everyone was sampling the product with hot, homemade biscuits. Meanwhile, Pat had gone in the house and brought out his banjo and was making a deal with Barbara and Mary to buck dance. We had our own little outdoor concert. He sang a couple of songs, gave us each some apple butter, and we were on our way back home.

VIVIAN BURRELL

The making of apple butter was once a quite common event. We talked to a number of people about it, and we found that, in addition to the Brooks method (illustrated in this chapter), there were many variations.

Pauline Henson and Mrs. Charlie Ross Hartley of Vilas, North Carolina, for example, used molasses instead of sugar. Here's their recipe:

Wash, slice, core and peel the required number of apples. Put a little water in the brass kettle first and heat, and then add the slices of apple filling the kettle nearly full. Cook them down, and stir them



PLATE 402 The apples are cooked on a stove for fifteen to twenty minutes, then run through a colander.

- to prevent sticking. After they are cooked down, add molasses to thicken. The molasses is added after the apples are cooked down to keep the butter from being lumpy.

Just before it's done, add sticks of cinnamon to taste. Then, when it's so thick you can almost cut it with a knife, put it up in half gallon or gallon crocks; place a cloth over the top, and seal the crocks with paraffin.

They can also remember apple butter being made in the molasses boiler during the last runs to get rid of the extra apples and keep them from going to waste.

Aunt Arie made hers in an iron washpot instead of a brass kettle, as she never had one of the latter. She told us:

"We always had so many good apples. See, we had an apple orchard there at home. We had hundreds of bushels of apples, till it come that storm and blowed the trees all up and Ulysses never did set'em back out. The few trees that were left made up more than we could use and he got old and crippled on both sides, couldn't dig much. And you can't hire people to do what you want done. You just have to do what you can do. Of course, we had plenty of apples. We've done away with three hundred bushels in one year. I tell you, I got so tired of picking up apples and carrying them to the house and giving them to everybody in Georgia and everywhere else, till I was glad when they were gone! Now that's the truth. Of course, I was stout then and could do it, but you done so much of it,

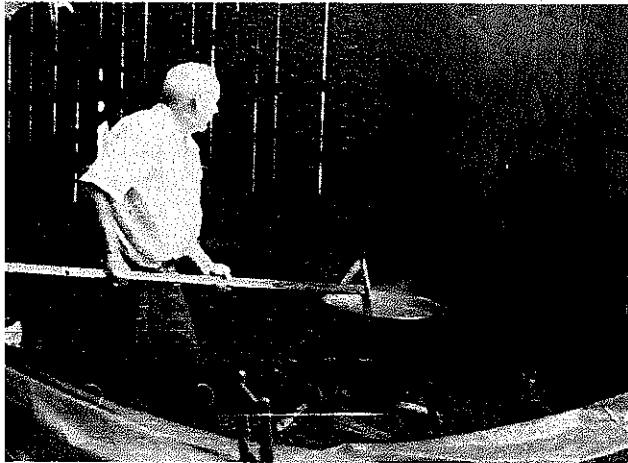


PLATE 403 The applesauce is poured into a twenty-gallon brass kettle heated by an open fire. (The kettle must be cleaned with a solution of vinegar and baking soda prior to use.) Mrs. Brooks said, "Brass is the only kind [of kettle] I would have. It just makes better butter somehow. I don't like a copper kettle because it makes the butter taste, I think."

Pat told us, "You can use any kind of wood for the fire except pine. [Pine would make the butter taste.] Don't let the wood touch the bottom of the kettle or the butter will burn."

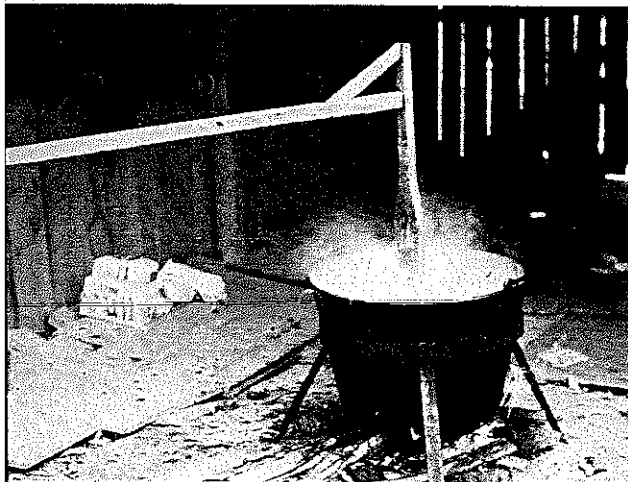


PLATE 404 Pat made the butter-stirring stick himself out of cypress. Wood with acid in it can't be used because it will impart a taste. He likes yellow poplar the best.

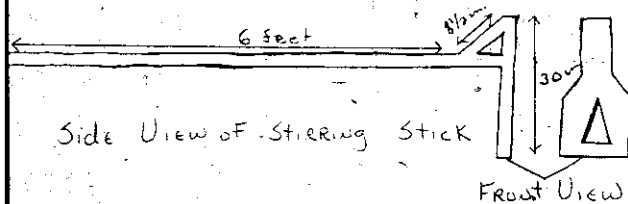


PLATE 405 Pat's stirring stick.



PLATE 406 The applesauce is constantly stirred until it's hot enough to melt sugar. Then, using one five-pound bag at a time at regular intervals, fifty pounds of sugar are poured in. The mixture must cook for about two hours, stirring it constantly.

"When you stir, you go once on one side, once on the other side, and once in the middle. You see, the bottom is narrow, and that way it won't stick."



PLATE 407 As the apple butter cooks, Pat brings out his banjo to liven up the proceedings.



PLATE 408 After 'two hours' cooking, the mixture is taken off the fire, and $4\frac{1}{4}$ fluid ounces of imitation oil of cinnamon (used by the Brooks) or other desired flavor is added.

you got tired of it. What I mean, you got give out of it—I'll put it that way. Your strength give out.

"Use good ripe, soft apples. Peel the apples and cut them up—not too fine. Add just enough water to prevent the apples from sticking while they cook. When the apples begin cooking good, mash them with a potato masher as fine as possible. Make the apple butter thick. Then add lots of sorghum to it for sweetening (if you don't, it'll sour). If you don't get the apple butter good and thick, and boil it down good, a five-gallon jarful will sour. Add ground cinnamon for flavoring. If you can't get cinnamon, use lemon.

"To store it, use five six-gallon crocks; tie the tops with cloth, then cover with paper and tie with string. When we wanted apple butter, we opened a crock and got out a bowlful, ate it, and went back for more.

"Lord, they loved apple butter at my house, mercy alive. See, there was so many boys and you know what boys will do. And Papa loved it! I can eat apple butter, but I never did love it like they did."

The Brooks family has been making apple butter every year for over forty years.

It takes three bushels of apples to make a stir. You can keep the apples for three or four days before using them in the apple butter. Mrs. Brooks explains, "I wouldn't have nothing but the Winesaps. That's the only kind that makes good butter. The other kind won't cook up good. Sour apples do. An apple that has a sweet taste to it [won't] make good butter."

Mrs. Brooks says, "Sometimes [we sell it], but most of the time we keep it. The family likes it. They must; every time I turn around they're asking for some."

I understand!

Aunt Arie also told us of other recipes that were brought to mind when we asked her about apple butter. "Now another thing that really I like a little better in one way is apple preserves. You make preserves out of the kind of apples that don't cook all to pieces—that stay whole.

"You peel the apples and cut them up into little pieces—they don't cook up. Put cinnamon or whatever you want to flavor them with. We put them in big old jars and tied them up. People don't can stuff now like they did then. Of course, if I was to make apple butter now, I'd want to put it in smaller jars and seal them up. And then eat it. You'd have it good all the time. Apple preserves are good!

"I've helped make gallons of apple cider. You have to have a cider mill to grind up your apples most of the time. Squeeze that all out and put it up. It's hard to make. I don't like apple cider much. Boys, they loved it at



PLATE 409 The apple butter is now done and ready to be poured into jars. Each stir (three bushels of apples) yields about seventy-five jars.



PLATE 410 "It's s'good that if you put some on your forehead, your tongue would slap your brains out trying t'get to it!" PAT BROOKS

home, though. We'd make it by the gallons. We'd fix the apples and put them in a big old wooden trough. We'd take a maul and beat up them apples and make cider out of them. They'd strain the cider out and put it in jugs or whatever they wanted to keep it in. How they did love it! Especially when it's sharp, as they called it. They left it till some of it commenced to sour just a little [and then they really enjoyed it.]

"You make pumpkin butter like you do apple butter. Cut the pumpkin up and peel it and cook that good. Then just mash it up and put sugar and flavoring in. That's all you have to do. We always made ours with cinnamon, and how good it was! Really pumpkin butter is easier to make than apple butter. We grew as high as a hundred big pumpkins in one year. We'd make it up to last a year and eat it every bit up before spring. We'd have to make a many a gallon to have enough to do us a year, 'cause we loved it. Then there was so many of us. You take a houseful of boys—they eat something!"

SORGHUM

At one time, syrup made from juice crushed out of sorghum cane was highly prized as a sugar substitute and sweetener. In some communities, aside from honey, it was the only sweet substance available, as sugar cost money, and money was the rarest commodity of all.

Some families in the mountains still produce sorghum (or molasses) for their own use, but the method of production, in most cases, has undergone some refinements. Nowadays, the mills that are used to crush the juice out of the cane are, more often than not, run by a gasoline engine or a belt connected to the power take-off of a tractor. Years ago, the rollers of the mill were turned by a horse or mule. The animal was hitched to the end of a long rein pole or "sweep." A rod mounted horizontally in, and at right angles to, the butt end of the sweep was tied to a line that went to the horse's halter so that as the horse pulled the lead end of the sweep forward, the line connected to the butt end would keep him pulling himself around in a never-ending circle (see *Plates 411 and 412*). The sweep turned a crusher roller in the mill, which in turn engaged a second (and sometimes a third) roller, forcing it to turn also. The cane was fed in between the rollers and crushed dry of its juice.

Since few people could afford these mills, it was common that men who owned one would move them from settlement to settlement, grinding and making the syrup for everyone in the area. In return, they were given a "toll"—usually every fourth gallon—in payment. Those who had helped the farmer harvest his cane were also paid in syrup. Making it was a long, slow process, however. Many mills could only turn out about sixteen gallons a day.

Today, those who grow sorghum grow it in much the same way as their families did before the turn of the century. In early April, the ground is

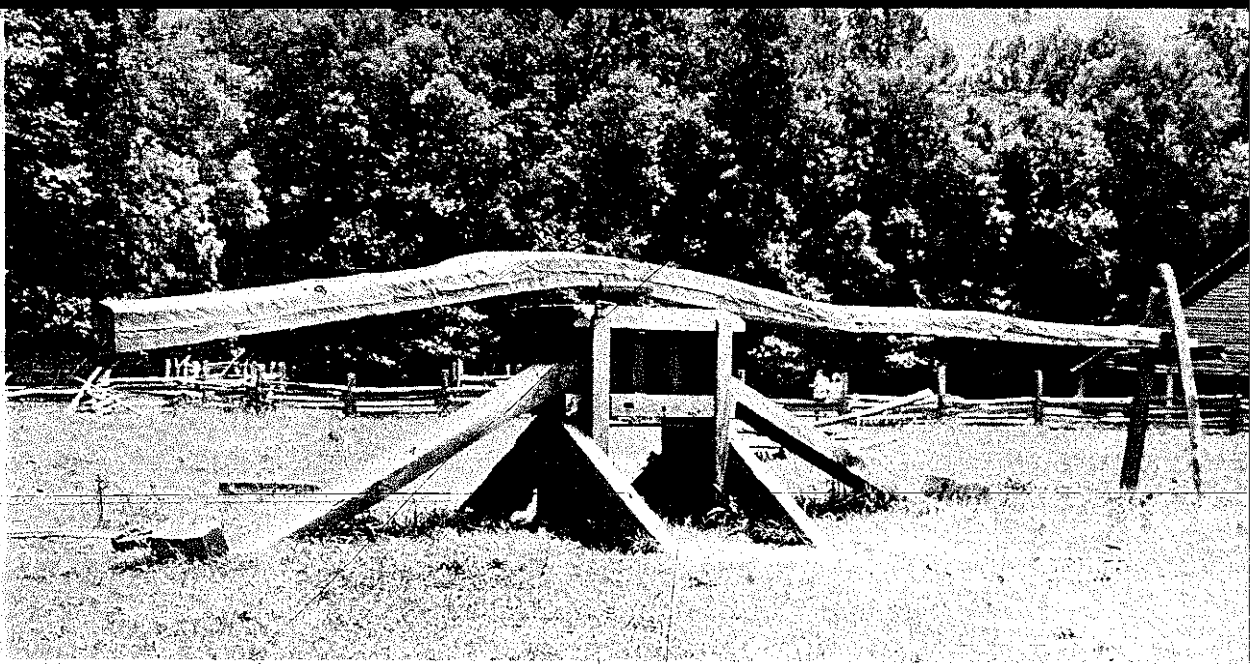
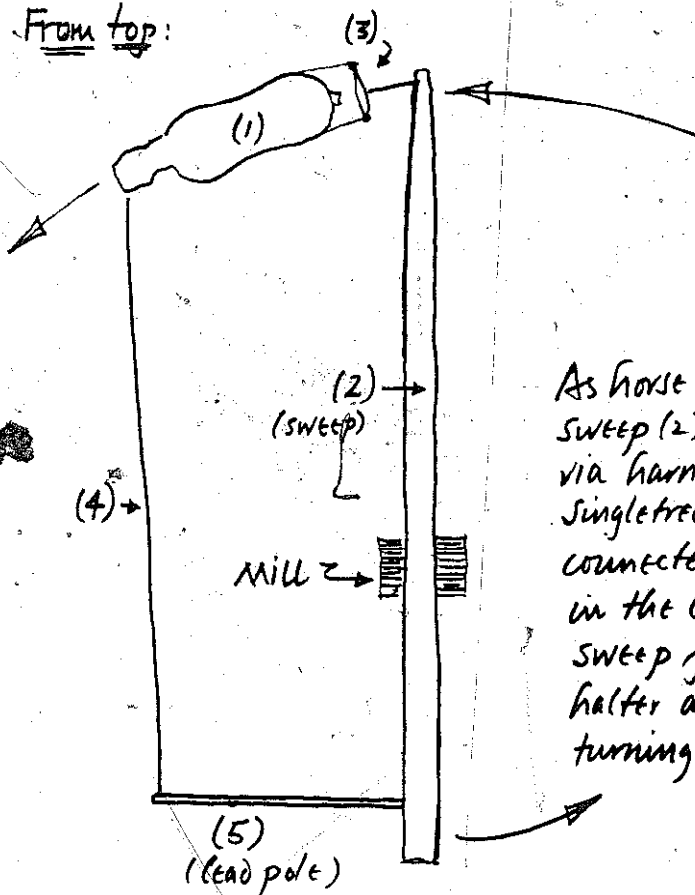


PLATE 411 A horse-operated sorghum mill in the reconstructed pioneer settlement at the Cherokee, North Carolina, entrance to the Smokies.

From top:



As horse (1) pulls sweep (2) in a circle via harness and single tree (3) a line (4) connected to a pole (5) in the butt end of the sweep pulls on his halter and keeps him turning in a circle

plowed and readied for planting the patch. Noel Moore claims that the soil the cane is planted in makes a big difference in the final product: gray soil for light, thin syrup; and red clay for thick, clear syrup. The seeds, which were saved from the crop the year before, are planted sometime between the middle of May and the first of July (often when the moon is in its growing phase, according to Noel Moore) so that it will be ready for harvest in mid-September—after the corn and before the first frost. It is planted in hills approximately a foot apart and with seven to twelve seeds per hill.

When the stalks are up, the farmer cultivates the rows and thins the number of stalks per hill to five to prevent the cane from growing too tall and thin, thus making the juice watery for lack of enough sun.

All through the summer months, the cane grows. It is ready to be harvested when the seeds turn red and hard. Hopefully, this will be before the first frost, for even though the frost won't necessarily destroy the crop, cold weather makes the plant turn tough and the leaves become harder to strip off. If wind, rain, or other bad weather knocks the stalks down before harvesting, some farmers just give the crop up and plow it under. Others, like Burnett Brooks, try to use it anyway.

At harvest time, the family goes through the field stripping off the stalks' leaves and cutting off the heads (the large red seed pods at the tops of the stalks). The leaves can be mixed with the cornstalks and used as silage. Some of the heads are saved for next year's seeds, and the rest are fed to the chickens or put out for the birds.

This job done, the farmer cuts the stripped cane stalks off at the base, using a sharp hoe or mowing blade, and stacks them in piles to be picked up immediately by horse and wagon, or tractor and wagon. The stalks are rarely left for long after they've been cut, as they will dry out in a matter of a very few days. Also, the cut ends can start to rot, souring the juice and ruining it. The stalks are taken to the mill as quickly as possible for crushing.

This fall, we were lucky enough to find one family producing sorghum for themselves in the most traditional way of all. Tim DeBord and Shanon Jackson drove up with Margie to cover it.

After a short winding drive up a narrow black-top road, we found the Brooks family hard at work making sorghum syrup. As we stepped out of the Blazer, we were greeted by a bunch of people—mostly kids.

They had saved a dozen or so stalks of cane and left Roxy, the nine year old horse, hitched up just to show us how the process of grinding the sorghum cane is done. The grinding had started at five that morning when one of their relatives, Lowell Buchanan, got up, hitched up the



PLATE 413 The cane is stripped and the tops removed. It is now ready to be ground by the mill.

PLATE 414 Some of the sorghum seed tops are saved to start for the following year's crop.



horse, and sat down in the dark to grind cane. Some people would think that's a lot to ask but this man was not asked; he volunteered.

When we asked about another type of furnace, this same man loaded two of us in his jeep and took us several miles up the road just to show us one. On the way, he told us some good hunting stories.

Mr. Burnett Brooks was the owner of the furnace and boiler-box he built in 1969. When people stopped by to see how it was going, Mr. Brooks was always there to say hello, and found time to talk about ground-hog hunting or bear season. People were just dropping in constantly. One man came by and skimmed the boiling juice for an hour and then left. He was "just a friend." Another friend, Robert Sutton, came by and stayed all day—just helping out.

Mr. Brooks made small paddle-spoons to scrape down the sorghum from the bottom of the boiler. These were about eight inches long and made of wood. They were given to the children when the sorghum was finished, and were good for getting a sample of sorghum. We found the kids getting ahead of the rest of us—they would slip their spoons into the sorghum while it was still boiling hot. They thought it was good—hot or not. And Mr. Brooks had just as much fun as the kids did.

As the morning passed, the amount of boiling juice in the box diminished. We were invited to lunch at a table loaded with food—green beans, chicken, corn relish, creamed corn, pickles, potatoes, fresh garden tomatoes, light bread, and sweet milk. We were given plates and filed by the table filling them with a taste of everything—then headed for the back porch shade. We all sat on the cracked edge of the cool, moist back porch. As one of us was about to take a big bite of crisp chicken, Mr. Brooks said, "Yeah, I pinched the head off that ol' rooster this morning."

We changed the subject and got him to talk about sorghum. He explained the whole process to us.

When the cane is harvested, the mill is oiled and the wood gathered to make ready for the cane-grinding. The Brooks have two wooden barrels, one thirty-gallon and one fifty-five-gallon, to be used for collection of the cane juice. A few days before the grinding, the barrels are filled with water so that the staves will swell making the barrels water-tight. Poplar and oak wood are used for the fire under the boiler. By the time the juice is prepared and added to the boiler, the fire has burned down to a bed of coals. Then more wood is added to bring the temperature of the boiler up, or the fire is doused with water to cool the boiler when the juice is boiling too vigorously.

Mr. Brooks has a three-roller mill. One of the rollers is stationary, the second is set at one-eighth inch, and the third at one-sixteenth inch from the stationary roller (*Plate 415*). As the horse turns the mill, the sorghum

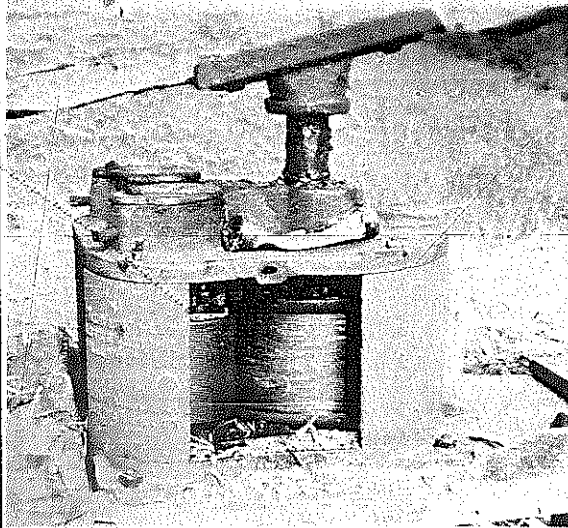


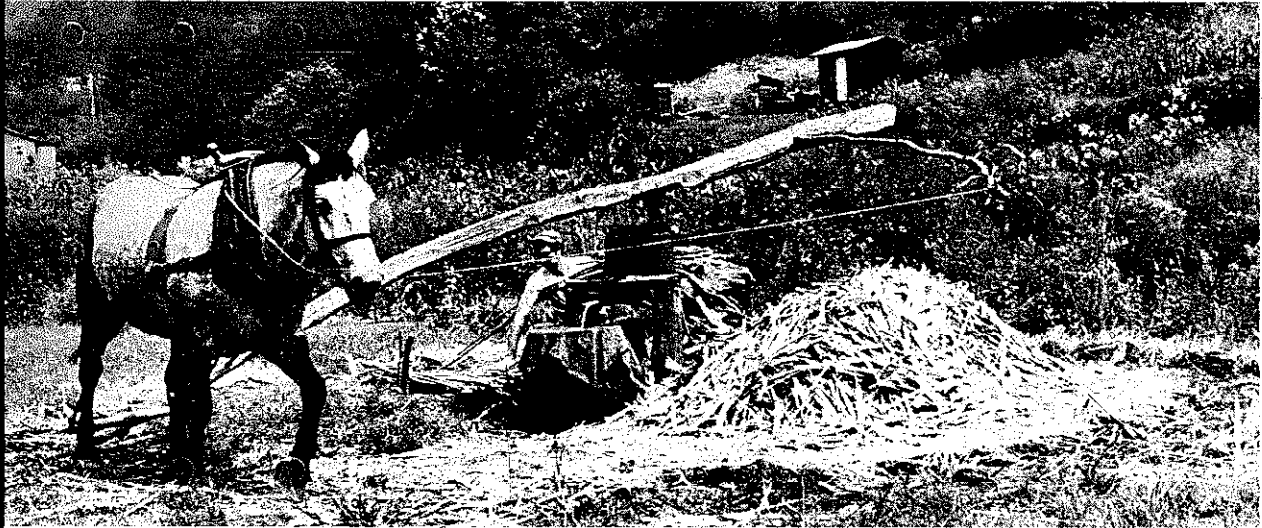
PLATE 415 Mr. Brooks's mill has three rollers (one is concealed in this photo).

is fed into one side of the mill. The bright green juice drops into a trough and down to a burlap-covered barrel. It is then taken to the boiler where it is poured through several layers of cheesecloth into the boiler. The boiler is filled to within two inches of the top for each batch. No more juice is added after that until that batch is completely cooked down and poured into containers for storage.

When the juice begins to boil, a dark foam forms on the top. A hand-made tool called a skimmer is then used. The skimmer is an eight-and-one-half-inch-square piece of metal attached to a broom handle. It is perforated so that the juice will run out and leave the foam on the skimmer. The skimmings are discarded into a hole nearby and later the hole covered with dirt. Usually the dogs get to the skimmings before they are covered and really enjoy this treat. We have been told that the skimmings were used at one time to help sweeten moonshine.

The juice has to boil for three to four hours. It is kept at a rolling boil by controlling the heat of the fire as mentioned. The boiler-box holds about eighty gallons. From this eighty gallons of juice come eight to ten gallons of syrup. The juice turns from bright green to a rich caramel color as it is cooked and thickens. When the syrup has cooked long enough, the boiler is lifted from the firebox and placed onto two logs, so that one end of the boiler can be tilted up and the syrup scraped to the other end with a long wooden paddle, about two feet long and flat on one end, made by Mr. Brooks. It is then dipped out of the trough with a small boiler (or saucepan) and poured through several layers of cheesecloth into five-gallon lard cans. After it cools, it is stored in smaller containers—quart jars or gallon cans.

After all the sorghum is finished, and all the syrup cooked and poured into containers, the boiler-box is washed thoroughly and mutton tallow is spread on it to keep it from rusting. After the tallow hardens, the boiler is stored upside down in a shed or barn. The barrels are washed and dried and stored away. The boom pole, which is attached to the mill, and the lead pole, which is attached to the boom pole, are taken down and stored until next year. The mill is covered with a tarpaulin and left for the kids to play on.



PLATES 416-418 As the horse turns the mill (*Plate 416*), cane is fed through it, several stalks at a time (*Plate 417*). The mill pulverizes the cane, leaving it dry and flaky on the inside (*Plate 418*). The pulpy ground cane will be spread on fields as mulch. The extracted juice runs into a burlap-covered barrel.





PLATE 418

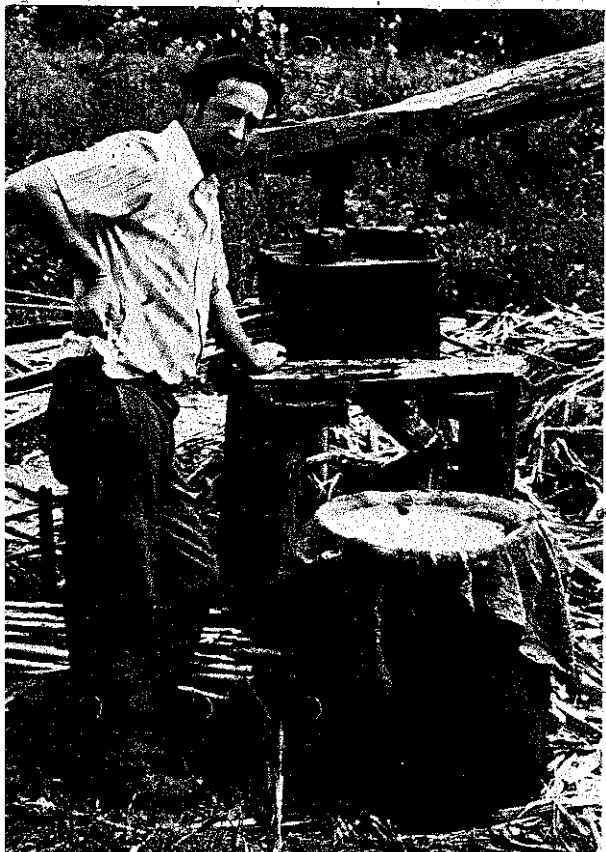


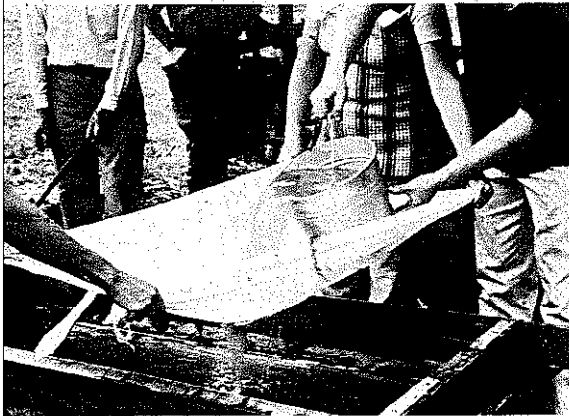
PLATE 419 The burlap bag spread over the barrel serves as a strainer. This is the first of three strainings during the entire sorghum-making process.



PLATE 420 The furnace is prepared for lighting.



PLATE 421 More wood is added to the furnace.



PLATES 422-423 The juice is poured through a cloth (strainer) into the trough, or boiler-box (Plate 422), until it is filled to within two inches of the top (Plate 423).

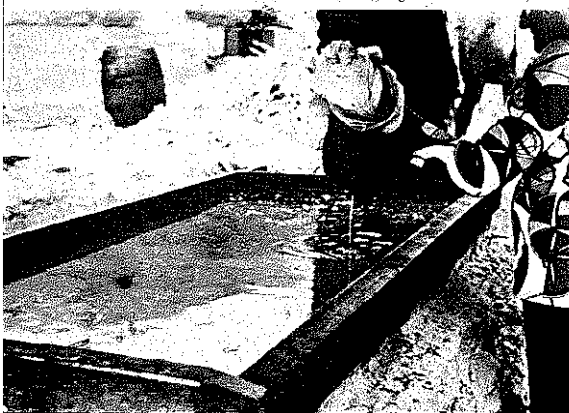


PLATE 423



PLATE 424 The juice is brought to a boil. Some evaporators are slightly different than the Brooks's. Another example is shown as a diagram (Plate 425); numbers 1 through 6 indicate the sequence of the flow of the juice, number 7 refers to the boiler.

PLATE 425

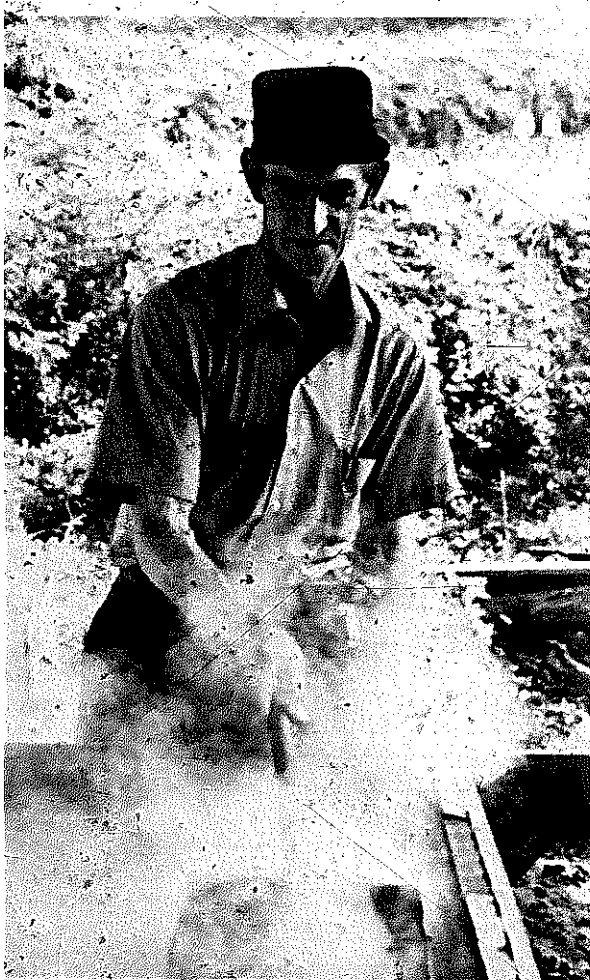
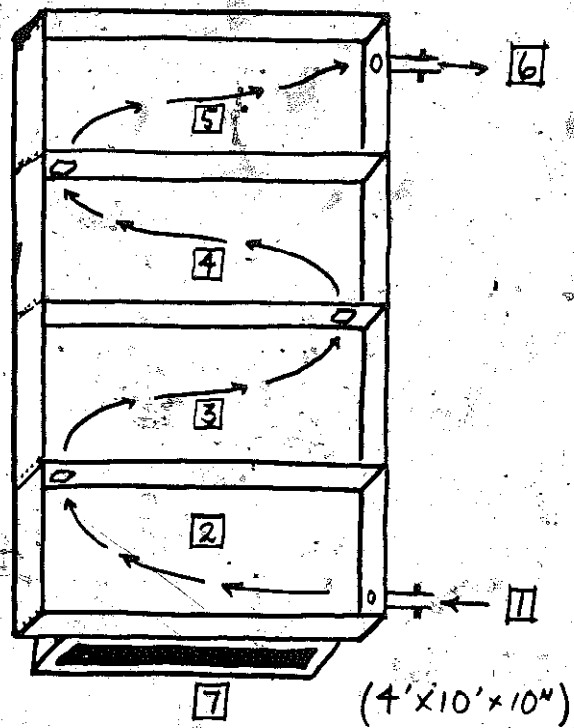


PLATE 426 Robert Sutton skims the foam off the boiling juice.

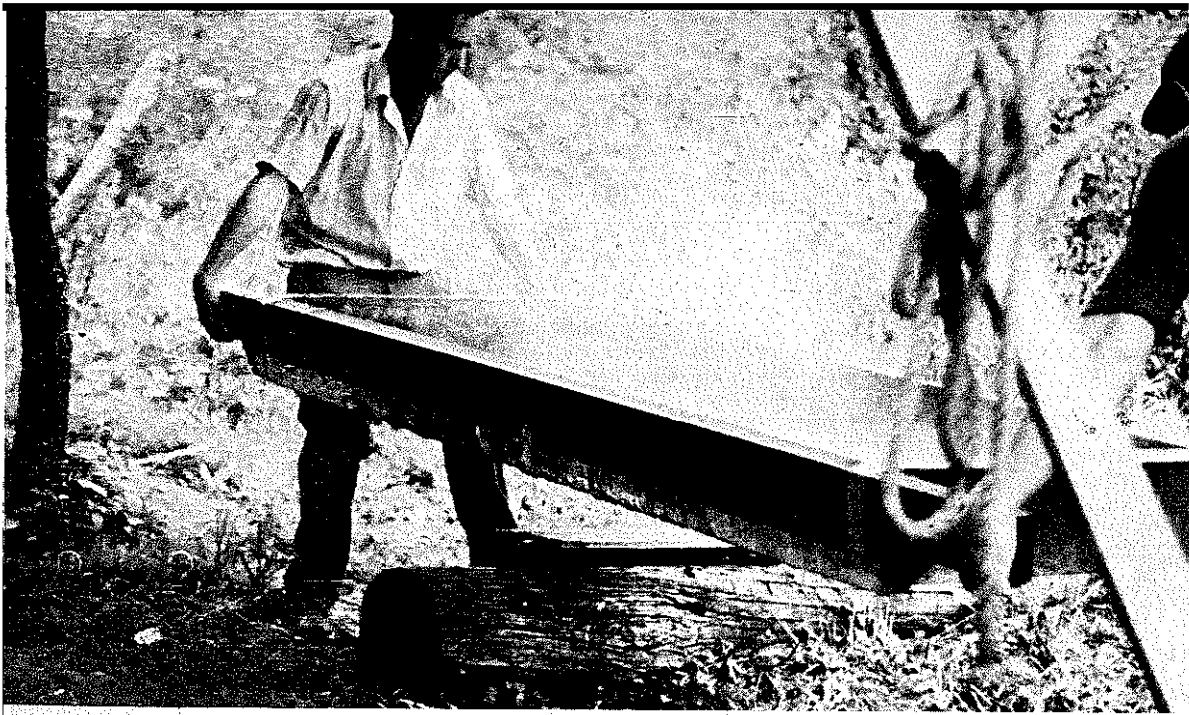
Some evaporators are slightly different from the Brooks's. One variety is shown in *Plate 425*. The syrup enters from the storage barrel at (1) through a valve that allows the operator to admit it at a controlled rate. The evaporator is tilted slightly (the exit end is about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch higher than the entrance end) and gates in the bars which divide it into sections allow the syrup to pass from one compartment into another. The arrows show the direction of flow of the boiling syrup which is slowly forced to the higher end by the pressure of the incoming syrup and the heat.

The cane juice is heated to the boiling point in the first two compartments (2) and (3). In the third compartment, the impurities left in the juice are forced to the surface where they are skimmed off by a man with a wooden strainer-paddle that has a long wooden handle.

In the fourth compartment (5) the juice is brought to the proper thickness for syrup. A cut-off gate at the entrance to this compartment allows the operator to admit the juice at a controlled rate. The syrup is ready to be drawn off (6) when the bubbles that rise from the bottom are about two inches in diameter and burst in the middle. If the bubbles are tiny, the syrup is still not ready to be released.



PLATE 427 Mrs. Brooks holds the skimmer. Note the holes in its bottom—juice runs through them but foam doesn't.



PLATES 428-430 The boiler-box is removed from the furnace (*Plate 428*), and the sorghum is scraped down to one end of the boiler-box (*Plate 429*). The sorghum is then dipped out of the boiler-box with a small saucepan (*Plate 430*).

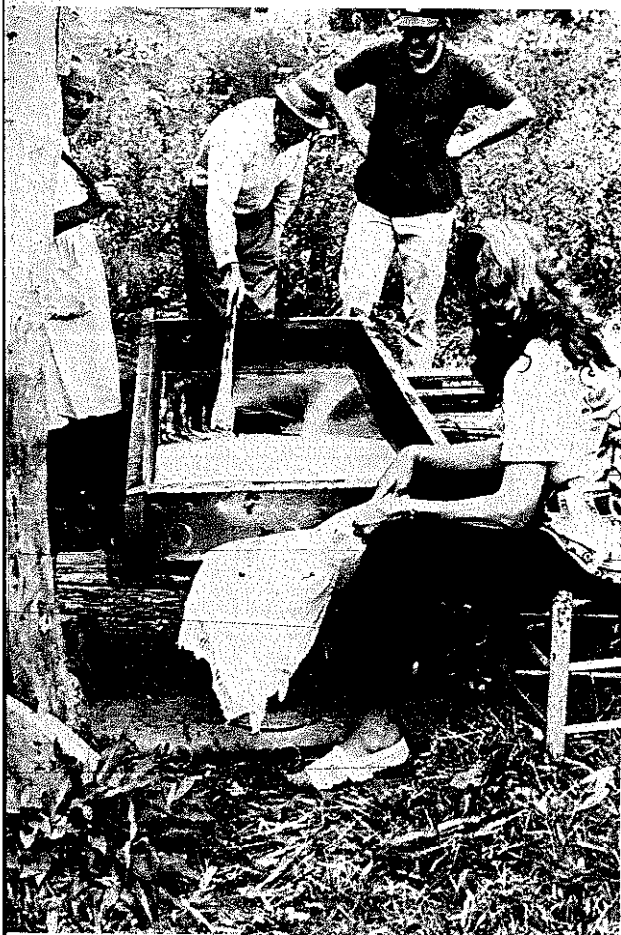


PLATE 430

PLATE 429

Ready syrup is drained off at (6). It proceeds down a trough, through another strainer, and then into the clay jugs that were used to store it for use during the winter.

Often the skimmings would be saved, boiled separately, and then worked into candy at a "candy pulling" which was one of the social events most looked forward to in the fall. "The candy," said Bill Lamb, "tasted *pretty* well, but mostly people came for the fun of it."



PLATE 431 Finally, the sorghum is poured through several layers of cheesecloth into five-gallon cans (the Brooks use empty lard cans), where it cools before being stored in smaller containers.

BROOMS AND BRUSHES

THE MONROE LEDFORD VARIETY

Through Maco Crafts in Franklin, North Carolina, we were introduced to Monroe Ledford, a delightful person who has raised broomcorn and made brooms for several years as a hobby. He uses the same technique as his parents and grandparents used. He will be retiring soon from road construction and plans to make brooms to supplement his retirement income.

As we drove up in the Ledfords' yard, we noticed bunches of sticks in neat piles, lumber near a workshop, and a shock of corn nearby. Off to the side of the house were woods, where Mr. Ledford showed us sourwood saplings that he prefers to use for broom handles.

Beyond the house, down the hill a short way, was his broomcorn field—about two acres. As we were visiting him in February, the field was bare, but we're hoping to go back in August and see the broomcorn in full growth.

Mr. Ledford makes his brooms in the garage adjoining his house. There on the rafters, he has all kinds of sticks to choose from for broom handles and walking sticks. He has his broom straw spread out on timbers in one corner to keep it dry and flat, and convenient to choose from as he makes each broom.

*Interview and photographs by Ken Kistner,
Phil Hamilton, and Lanier Watt.*



PLATE 432 Monroe Ledford and his brooms.



PLATE 433 Broomcorn

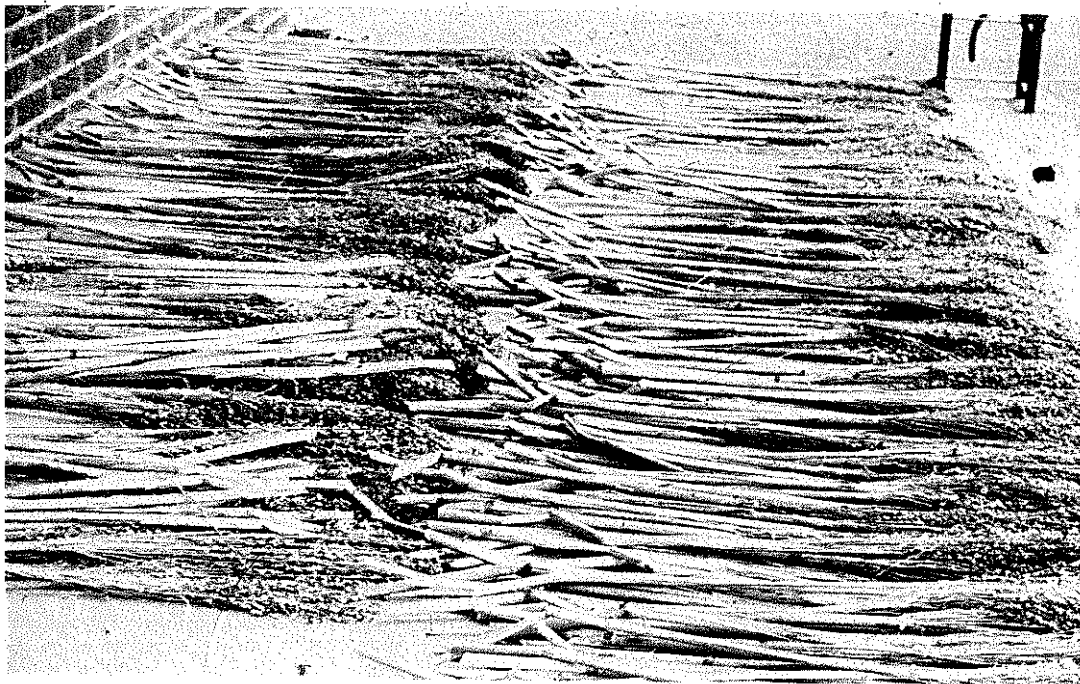


PLATE 434 The harvested straw drying.

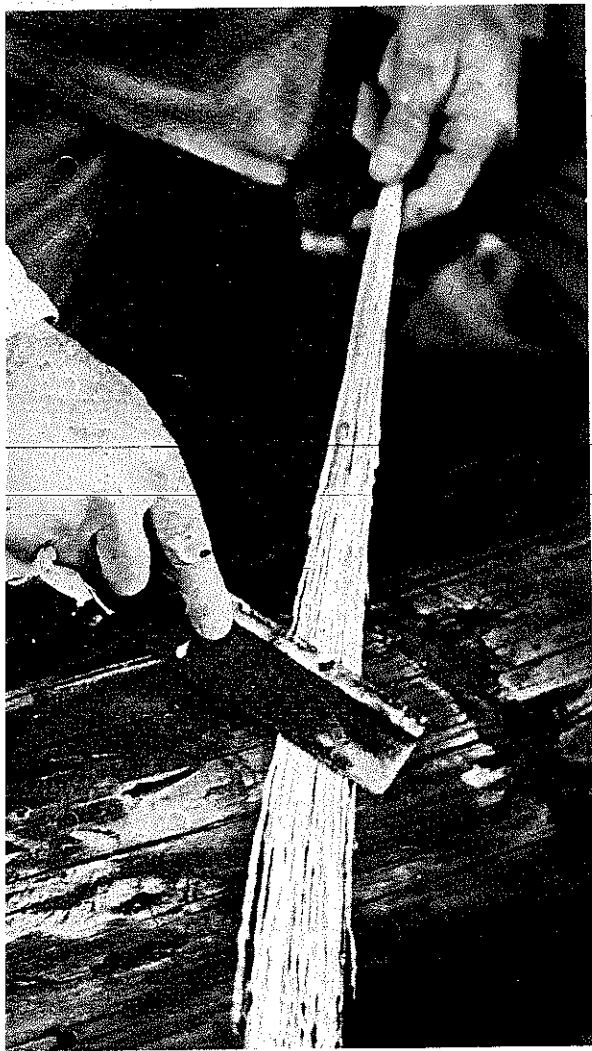
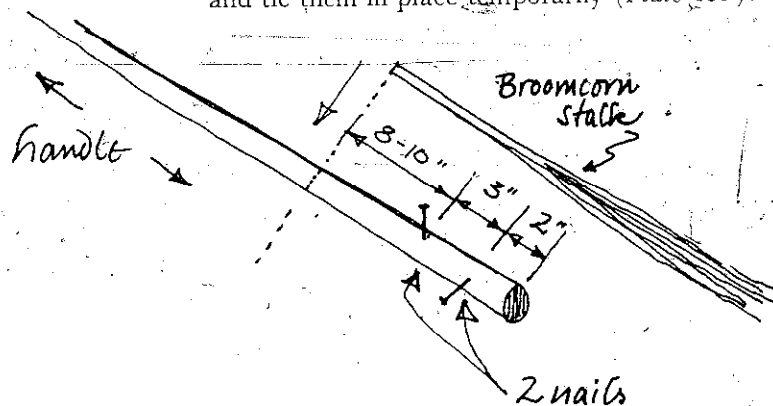


PLATE 435 First the seeds are combed out of the tassel or head. Seeds that are not saved for planting the next year are simply plowed under in a nearby pasture.

PLATES 436-439 Set two small nails in the handle to prevent the stalks from slipping off after they have been tied in place (Plate 436). Surround the end of the handle completely with one layer of stalks (Plate 437) and tie them down in two places with strips of cloth or string. With a knife, shave off or taper the ends of this first layer of stalks to reduce bulk (Plate 438). Then add a second layer of stalks and tie them in place temporarily (Plate 439).





• PLATE 437



PLATE 438

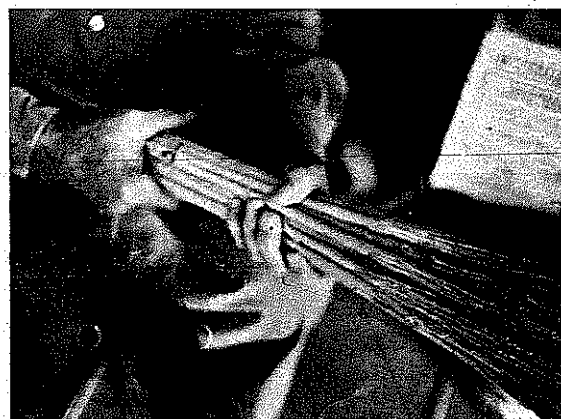


PLATE 439

I started to make brooms just for a hobby, that's all. Just thought I'd make a few brooms, and if somebody wanted them, I would have them to give. And that's what I did, till I gave away two or three hundred dollars' worth. The most expensive part of the broom is your time. This little ball of twine that I'm weaving with costs 75¢. It'll make five or six brooms, maybe more.

They make a nylon cord that won't break, but it's not good to use for weaving brooms because it won't hold—it's too slippery. You can't keep nylon cord tight. The cord I use is made of cotton; it doesn't stretch.

I use a type of carpet needle—bowed a bit so that it goes in and out of the stalks easy enough when you're weaving the string through. It probably costs about 35¢ at the dime store in Franklin.

About the first of June, I prepare my soil and plant the broomcorn; it's just like planting corn or sorghum. Only I plant it a lot thicker. Broomcorn [can be planted] about every five inches apart. I guess if your ground is good enough, you probably wouldn't have to use much fertilizer. It's not too hard to grow. An acre of broomcorn will make lots of brooms.

I save most of my seed for the next year. I don't imagine any stores around here would handle the kind of seed I use. Now that's something I've never done—gone to a store for seed. I guess you could order them from a seed book somewhere.



PLATE 440 Lay the broom on a cement floor or in a long trough of some type. Cover it with a burlap sack and pour scalding water over the broom to soften the stalks so that they will be pliable enough to stitch through them. Leave them under the wet sack about ten to fifteen minutes. String will now be tied tightly around the broom to hold the stalks in place permanently. To do this, Mr. Ledford uses an apparatus of the same type used by his parents' generation (Plate 440). Hang a rope from a rafter; it must be long enough to allow a loop at the bottom for the broom maker's foot, four to six inches above the floor. Wrap the rope once around the broom near the point where it will be tied. Push down on the rope with your foot to tighten the loop around the broom. Twisting the broom upward will tighten the loop more.



PLATE 441 When it seems quite tight, take a five- or six-foot piece of heavy-duty cotton string threaded through a carpet needle. Run this through the center of the brush right below the point at which the stalks stop and the brush begins (Plate 441). The needle will have to be pulled through with pliers. Then bring the needle out and twist string all the way around the broom and tie very tightly. As the broom straw dries, it will expand around the string, tightening it further. Twist the loose end of the string so that it goes into the center of the broom and will not be seen.



PLATES 442-443 If you want to weave the stalks instead of simply ringing them in four places, start weaving the string from the brush and weave toward the bare handle in a standard over one, under one pattern. If you end up needing to weave two stalks at one time to keep the pattern, go ahead (Plate 443). Mr. Ledford says he has tried to put an odd number of stalks around, but it rarely works out that way, so he doesn't worry about it any more. He just catches up two stalks if he needs to.

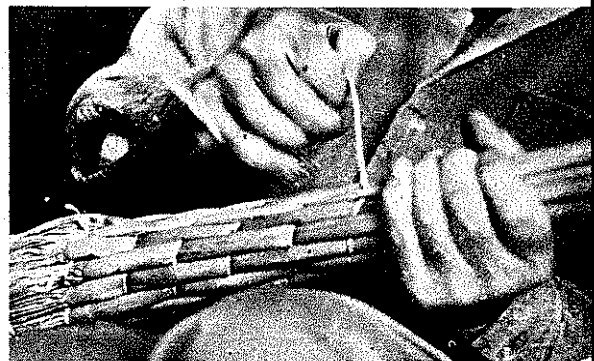


PLATE 443

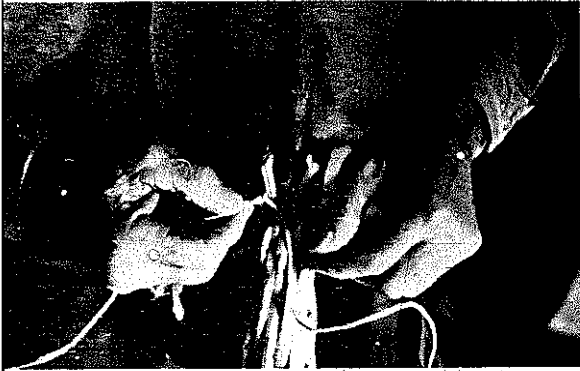


PLATE 444 To finish up, put the broom back in the loop of the rope apparatus near the top of the stalks and tighten. Tie the string very tightly at the top to finish off the weaving (Plate 444). The excess string may be used to make a loop there to hang the broom by the fireplace. Trim off the excess stalk at the top of the string. Leave a string or rag wrapped around the lower part of the broom to keep the brush from spreading until the broom is hung by the fireplace or wherever it will be kept.

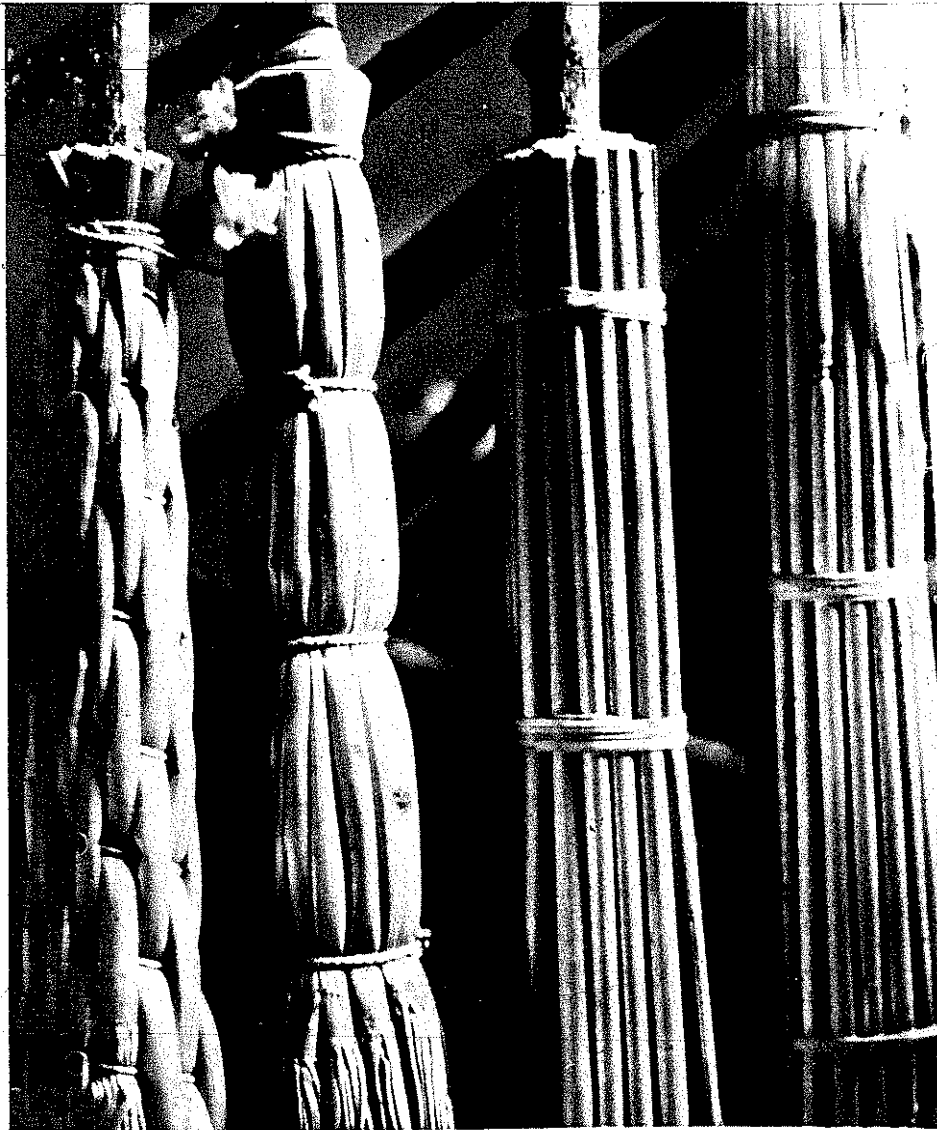


PLATE 445 Several handle designs are common. The style chosen depended on personal preference.

About eight years ago, a neighbor gave me a handful of broomcorn seed. I never thought to ask them where they got the seed. I planted them and that's how I got started in the broom business. About ten or fifteen years ago, my stepmother gave me some seed—I don't know where she got them, South Carolina, maybe—and I grew the corn to make that broom there [standing in the corner of the garage]. I had enough corn for several brooms, but I was busy, and just made that one and left the rest to lie around and ruin.

September is when I start cutting it—before frost—when the head begins to be pretty well filled out, while the seeds are still green. This happens before you know it. Then I go and break the stalk about three feet below the top, and let that hang down. This helps the brush to stay straight. If the stalk is not broken over like this, the straw becomes too heavy with seeds and begins to fall down and turn the wrong way.

So that's the first thing I do. After a few days I cut it. Broomcorn should be cut while still green. It makes tougher brooms this way.

You want to leave it out to cure, but you must be careful not to let it get rained on too much; it mildews and deteriorates pretty quickly while it's green. I don't like to leave it out in the field after it's cut; I'd rather not have it rained on. I like to keep it dry and just put it out in the sun each day—it's got to have sunshine to cure.

Some people like a red-colored broom. If the broomcorn is not harvested, or cut, until after it is completely ripe, the straw will be red. The straw is more brittle, and the broom not quite so durable, as one made with broomcorn cut before it is fully ripe, but for some people this is suitable because the broom will be used for ornamentation more than utility.

After I cure it, I cut the stalks in the shape I want them. I cut them at an angle or split off part of the stalk to reduce bulk around the handle of the broom.

I comb the seeds of the straw with a child's saw that one of my grandsons had left around here. Any kind of sharp-toothed tool could be used, just to rake out the seeds and fluff up the straw.

My brooms are generally three and a half to four feet long from the top of the stick down to the end of the brush. I have to pick out stalks that match, that are pretty much the same length. Sometimes I put the best corn inside just to get the right length to match around the outside. Sometimes I put the big, long brushes inside; the bigger and longer the brush, the tougher and better broom you've got, you know.

Then they're ready to place on the broomstick. Now what they call a hearth broom, if I understand it right, is just stalks—no broomstick. Al-

though some people do put a small stick in them, long stalks of broom-corn can be used and just bunched together and the stalks woven as for a regular broom. Just use long stalks, and use the stalk handle to hold it. It's the same length as those longer stalks that aren't split. Well, to make a hearth broom, I do split part of them that won't show, and then leave the ones on the outside unsplit.

THE AUNT CELIA WOOD VARIETY

"How does it feel to be one hundred years old?" was one of the first questions we asked Aunt Celia Wood. "Well, not much different from ninety-nine," was all the answer we got.

Aunt Celia is our oldest contact, and even at one hundred she still keeps her house spotless. She also makes her own brooms out of broom sage and twine. As she showed us how, she talked of various things. She has definite opinions on many current subjects, and we were fascinated by her spirited comments on such things as politics and religion.



PLATE 446

On Going to the Moon: I don't believe there is no such business. When God made this world, he gave man authority t'subdue [animals]. Gave control over fowls, beasts, fish. Well, God left space for himself. He's got th'sun, moon, stars. Man ain't got no business a'foolin' with'em.

On Politics: They's a lot of things goin' on that oughtn't. Hit's th'leaders of th'country. Congress, and th'President said America was sick. Doctor it! Congress is treatin' America like a doctor who don't know what he's a'doin'.

[When women got the right to vote] I registered. I voted several years. I didn't care whether I did or not, but my husband wanted me t'register and vote. Said th'other women was all a'doin' that, and most of'em did. I wish they hadn't, 'cause they gave'em that privilege and now they're a'tryin' t'take over. I don't like that—even if I am a woman. I think that's men's work. 'Course they're makin' a right smart mess out of it. Maybe if th'women had it all they *might* do better.

On Religion: Well, I couldn't live without it. When I'uz thirteen years old, I joined th'Baptist church. I've been a Baptist ever since. I don't fall out with th'other denominations because hit's not th'church that saves'y'. Don't do you any good t'join th'church if you ain't saved.

I'm a'lookin' forward to a better time than I've got. I've enjoyed life. I've had a lot a'sorrow. I'd a'never went through it all if it hadn't a'been for th'Lord.

My parents treated us strict. There were parties. We never went to 'em. My daddy said dances would lead you wrong. They trained me that they was a Lord over us all. And they'd read th'Bible to us every night. Had a big fireplace. I can see m'old daddy. After supper he'd throw in a piece a'pine wood, lean his chair back, and read th'Bible to us. I wuz th'oldest. Then he'd get his songbook and they'd set there and sing. We enjoyed it. We knowed t'behave. I think that has a lot t'do with our young people. Young people get into mischief, but you'll think about what daddy and mommy said.

I was married eighty-six years. I didn't have no children, but I've always had children around me. I always tried t'give th'boys good advice. I got after a boy one day. I'uz a'settin' here, and he cussed. I says, "I'm not a'gonna' have anybody around me that cusses." I told all of'em that. They never did cuss any more around me. And I had that boy tell me after he married that if it hadn't a'been for my advice, he didn't know what he'd a'made.

I'uz just a'sudyin' about that—advice to a person just startin' out. Now one of th'boys married a girl who had never been saved. I talked

t'her. I advised her. I asked her what church she belonged to just t'start it off, y'know. I said t'her, "Ain't y'never been saved?"

She said, "No."

I told her, "You're married now, and most ever'body is apt t'have some children," and I says, "Y'can't raise up your children right without th'Lord. When y'go in yer new house, y'ought t'take th'Lord with you." I told her that.

All my boys was church members. But one day I found a deck a'cards in a drawer. But I never said a word. So one night after supper, he said, "Let's have a game."

I said, "Lamar, I don't know how."

He said, "Oh! I'll show y'."

I said, "No, I won't play cards."

He said, "Why? Hit won't be a bit a'harm fer you and me t'sit here and play a game a'cards."

I said, "I don't believe it'll stop there. Playin' cards is like drinkin' liquor. Hit will grow on y'."

He said, "Oh!" He wouldn't let it.

I says, "Y'can't help it if y'play awhile with me'r'anybody." I says, "You'll get t'where you can play pretty good, and you'll want t'bet some."

"Oh," he said, "I wouldn't."

I said, "If I was t'play cards with y', and later you was t' get into a rarr [argument], then you'd think back and say, 'Well, Aunt Celia learnt me.' I'd be t'blame. I'd be th'cause of it."

He still thought he'd get me t'play, so he kept on. He said, "Well, if y'don't play with me here, I'll go t'somebody's that will. And I'll bet my farm!"

I said, "See there? Already you're a'thinkin' about bettin'." He never did ask me, ner I never did see that deck of cards n'more. They got missin'. He got t'thinkin' about what I'd said t'him.

If I could go back, I would want t'live closer and do more for th'Lord. Go t'church and all. I've tried t'live a pretty good life.

I've never harmed anybody.

Done my part.

The brooms Aunt Celia makes are of bundles of broom sage trimmed to about twenty-four inches long and bound at the base by twine or a narrow strip of cloth wrapped around the straw eight to ten times (*Plate 446*). "This used to be all th'kind of broom we had. They last me about three months. 'Course I don't do much sweepin'. I have t'hold to a chair. I sweep out th'corners twice a week. I don't do no moppin' though. I got

a woman t'get me a bundle of straw and I made six of 'em. You can have this'n now. You sweep with it!"

It was my hope that we would be able to interview Aunt Celia often, but she grew ill, and died in October.

This was a personal loss for me. She was a friend, but more than that I was attached to her like close kinfolk.

Aunt Celia will not be forgotten, and what she told us will be preserved, and cherished by our staff for years to come.

She has set an example and hopefully, many will follow it. I won't think of Aunt Celia as dead—just gone home.

KATHY LONG BLALOCK

SCRUB BRUSHES

A durable brush or mop was needed to clean the rough-hewn wooden floors of log houses. Here's a description of one type we've found used in earlier mountain homes.

This scrub brush was made from a small white oak sapling trunk about two inches in diameter and four feet long. From the bottom, the trunk is shaved into thin, narrow splits (as for white oak splits) about twelve inches long. Be sure not to cut the splits away from the main part of the trunk (see Plate 447).

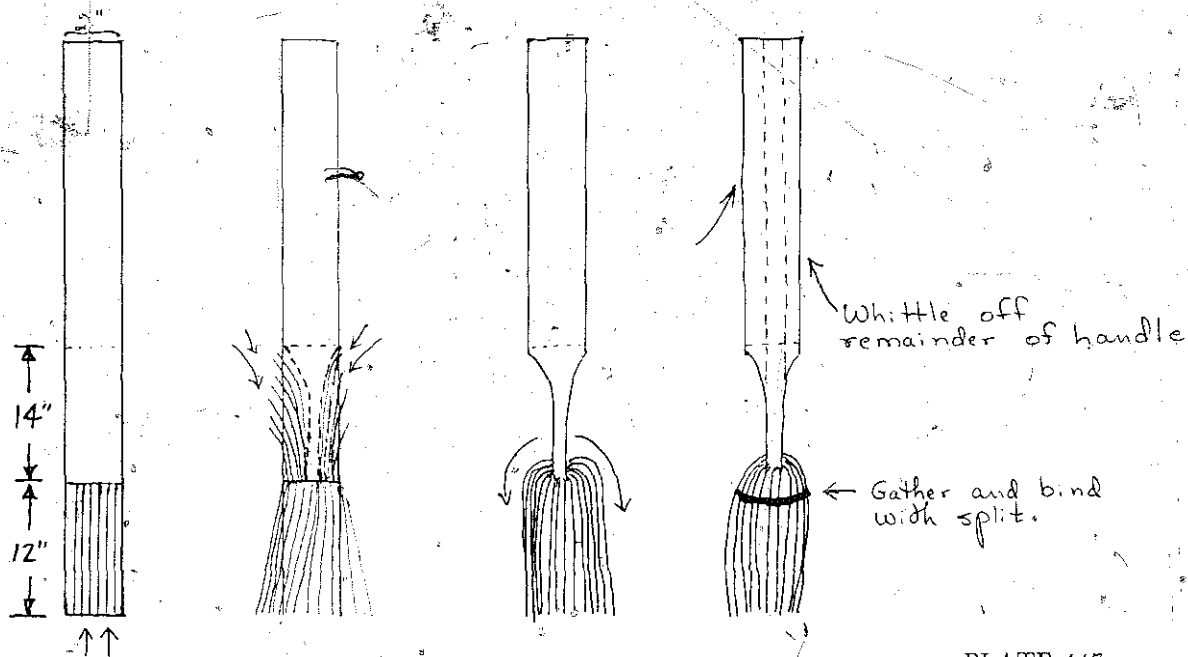


PLATE 447

Then split the wood down about twelve to fourteen inches and bend these splits over to form the outer "bristles" of the brush. Use a narrow leather strap or another split to hold the bristles together (Plate 448).

To scrub, throw sand and water on the floor and scrub with the brush. Sweep the sand off and the floor will be white.



PLATE 448

CORNSHUCK MOPS, DOLLS AND HATS

We heard from a number of people that Mrs. Kate Hopper, who works in the Rabun Gap Craft Shop, knew how to make scrub mops from cornshucks. As we were interested in this subject, we went to investigate. Luckily, she agreed to make one for us, and as she made it, we took a set of photographs so you could see how it is done.

Photographs and interview done by Jan Brown and Mary Garth.

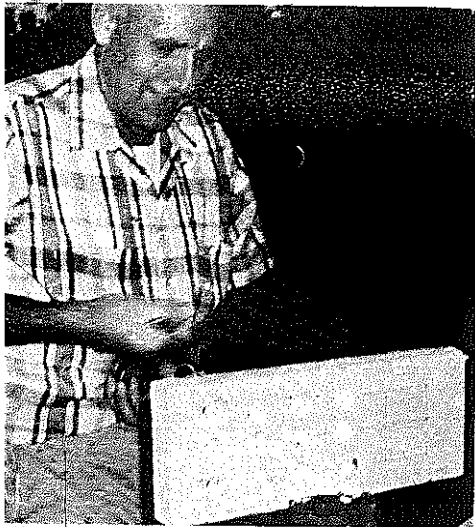


PLATE 449 I. D. Hopper (Kate's husband) works on the board for the mop. The board should be $5\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, $13\frac{3}{4}$ " long, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Eighteen holes (one inch in diameter) should be placed in three rows of six holes each, as pictured.



PLATES 450-452 Kate soaks the cornshucks in a tub for several minutes to make them pliable. Then she and Jan Brown (right) fit the dampened cornshucks through the holes (*Plate 450*). The loose ends of the shucks are put through first. Note that the whole shuck is used; the shank is not cut off until after the mop is completed. When all the loose ends are through, they should be pulled firmly until they are tight (*Plate 451*). Then Kate trims the shanks and ends to make them even (*Plate 452*).

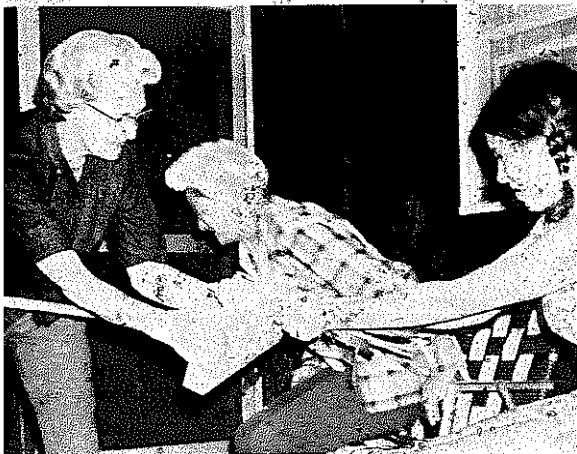




PLATE 453 Mary Garth demonstrates the effectiveness of the new mop on Kate's porch.

DOLLS

The cornshuck dolls we have photographed were made by Daisy Justice and Lassie Bradshaw. Not many of our contacts remember making or playing with cornshuck dolls as children. They remember more about home-made rag dolls, although they did make little horses and dogs from shucks. The cornshuck dolls now are usually made for doll collectors more than for toys.

The materials needed are a ball of twine or crocheting thread (not nylon as it stretches); scissors; a bowl of water to dampen the shucks; clean shucks—white, or any available colors (mildewed or dark shucks may be used for the bottom layers of the skirt and the inside parts of dolls); and corn silks—blonde, red, and brown—for hair.

Different people have told us varied lengths of time to wet the shucks before using. It seems the best formula to follow for dolls is to trim a few shucks, dip them in water for three to five minutes, then drain and use.



PLATE 454 Daisy Justice works on a cornshuck doll.



PLATES 455-459 To make the head, cut a cornshuck two inches wide and six inches long. Fold it over lengthwise, making it one inch wide (*Plate 455*). Begin folding shuck down several times to make the filling for the head (*Plate 456*). When finished, the filling for the head should appear as shown (*Plate 457*). Cover the filling with another shuck as illustrated (*Plate 458*). This shuck will extend below the neck to form the upper body of the doll. Tie the shuck at the neck (*Plate 459*) to secure it tightly.

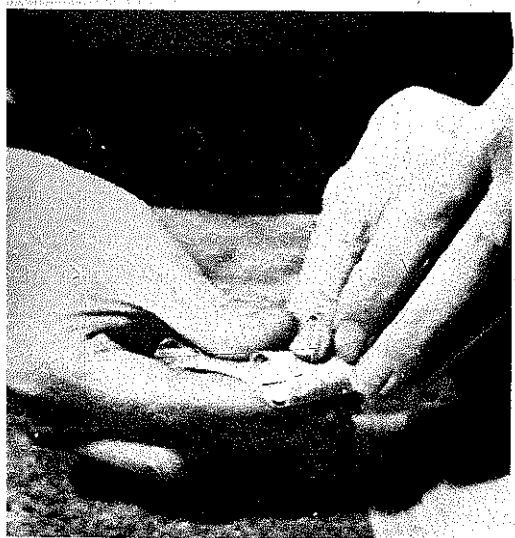


PLATE 456



PLATE 457

PLATE 458

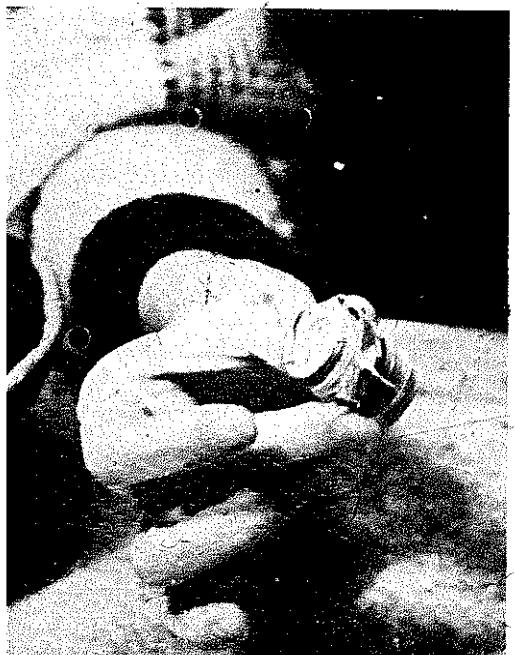


PLATE 459

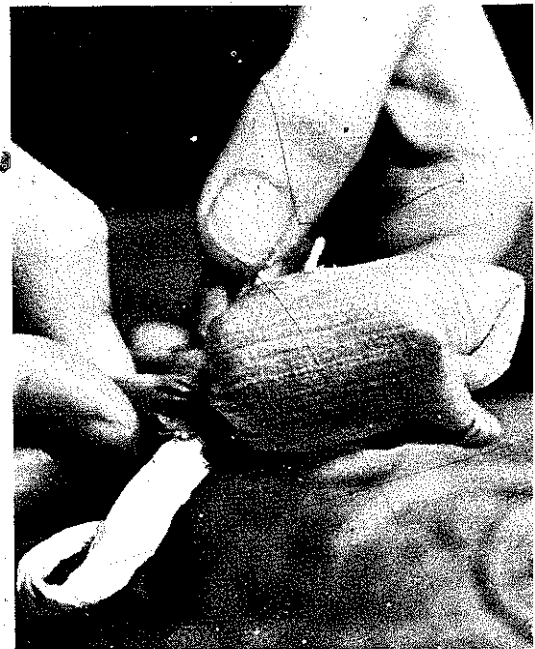


The shucks seem easier to use when dampened a short time rather than soaked. As the shucks dry on the newly made doll, they will fluff out. The sashes will tighten so that they don't come untied when dry.

There are many variations of the cornshuck dolls ranging in sizes from three to twelve inches high. Some wear dyed dresses (the shucks are dyed just like fabric before making the dolls); some are boy dolls with pants on.

We believe that the pattern shown is a basic style, and once you get the gist of making a cornshuck doll, you will develop your own techniques and try out various ideas.

*Interviews by Sharon Jackson, Julia Justice, and Annette Reems.
Photographs by Phil Hamilton. Text by Annette Reems.*



PLATES 460-462 For the arms, pick two shucks about the same size (one will be used for each arm). Twist each shuck as pictured (Plate 460). Bend each twisted shuck in half (Plate 461) and tie one on either side of the body of the neck with string. Attached arms should appear as shown (Plate 462).

PLATE 461

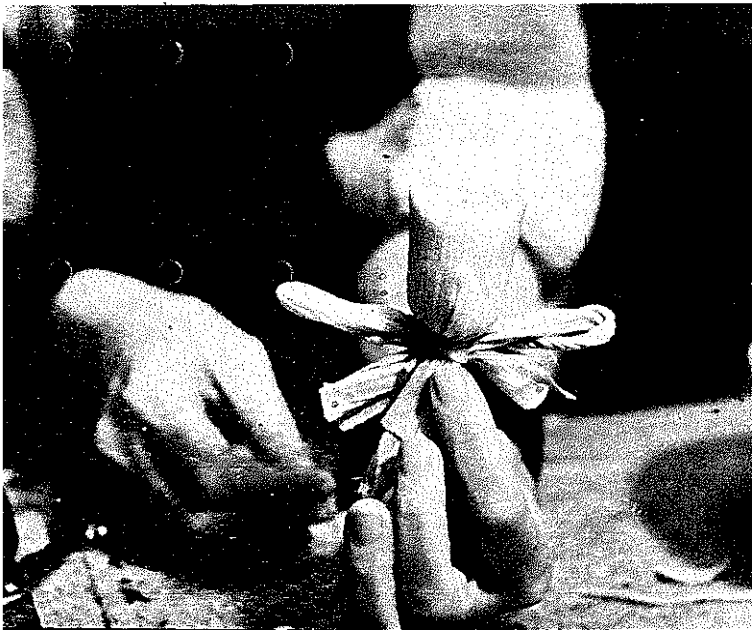


PLATE 462

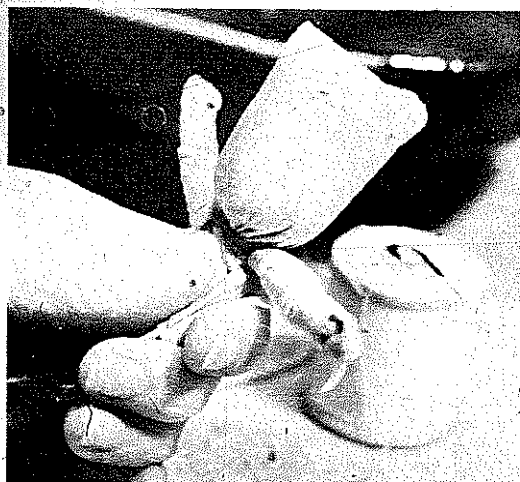


PLATE 464.

PLATES 463-465 Take another shuck and wrap it around one arm—forming a sleeve beginning about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the folded end (hand) of the arm, and wrap back toward the head (Plate 463). Bring the end of the wrapped shuck across the back of the doll diagonally to the waist. Go through the same process with the other arm. Sleeved arms should appear as pictured (Plate 464). The sleeve strips criss-cross in back. Tie them at the waist with a piece of string (Plate 465).



PLATE 465



PLATES 466-467 Now cover the body with two shucks. One goes diagonally across each shoulder (*Plate 466*). These shucks crisscross in back and front. Tie them at waist with string (*Plate 467*).

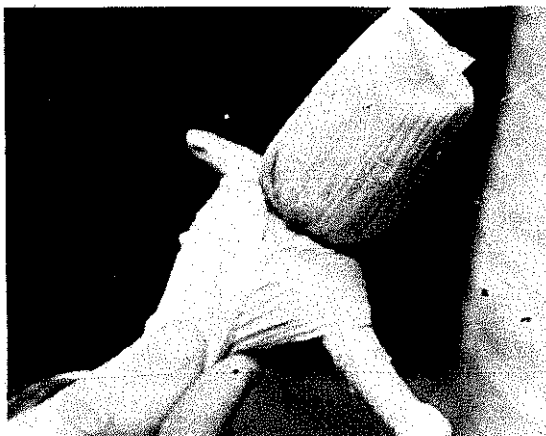
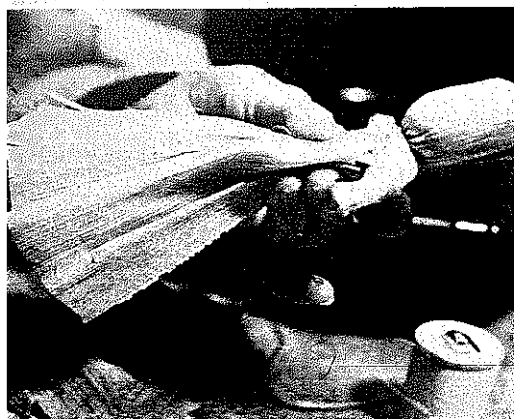


PLATE 467



PLATES 468-470 Place several shucks lengthwise (one at a time) around the waist. The shucks will overlap to form a full, long skirt (*Plate 468*). Use as many shucks as needed for desired fullness, and tie at waist with string (*Plate 469*). Trim the skirt to make it even, so the doll will stand straight (*Plate 470*).

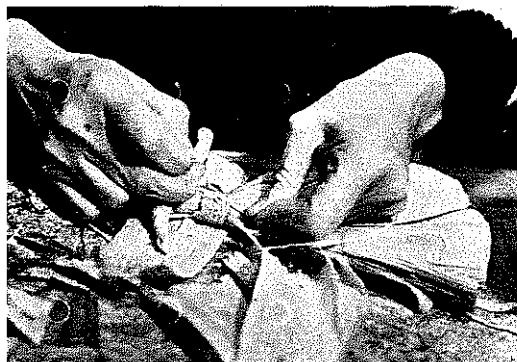


PLATE 469

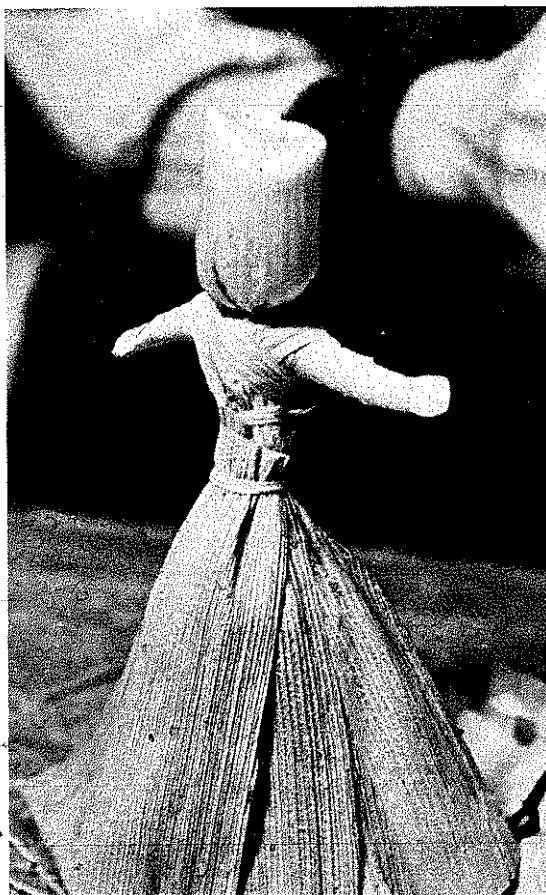


PLATE 470



PLATE 472



PLATES 471-472 . Next crisscross two shucks over the shoulders (*Plate 471*) and bring them down below the waist in front and back. Fold another shuck into a long, narrow strip. Put it around the waist and tie as a sash in back to hold the bodice secure (*Plate 472*). (An apron may be added before the sash is tied by cutting a shuck into a heart shape and placing it around the waist.)

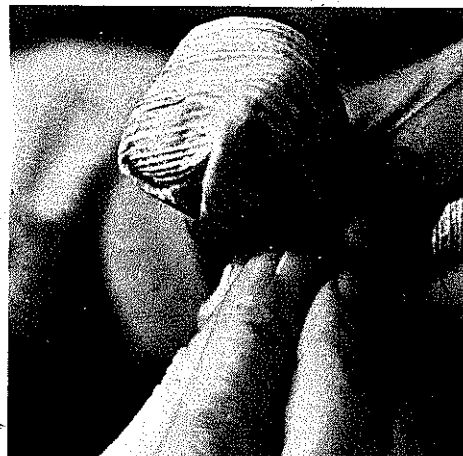


PLATES 473-474 Dampen corn silks and put them over the doll's face. Tie the silks around the forehead with string (*Plate 473*). Flip the silks to the back, exposing the face (*Plate 474*). The string will be completely covered by the "hair."



PLATES 475-476 Take a 1½-inch-wide strip of shuck about six inches long and place it over the head, leaving the hair exposed just above the face (*Plate 475*). Fold the hat down over the back of the head. Then fold in the side to the middle, bunching in back (*Plate 476*). Tie with string and cover with a narrow shuck for the hat tie. Finish the doll by drawing a face with pen and ink.

PLATE 476





PLATES 477-479 Other accessories may be added, such as a bucket (*Plate 477*). Use any small, deep container, such as a plastic bottle cap. Punch holes in each side of the "bucket" and run a twisted shuck through the doll's hand (loop formed by folded arm shuck), and then through the holes of the bucket to form a handle. Small dried flowers stuck through the doll's hand are another option (*Plate 478*). Touch a little glue to the stems and hand to secure the flowers. For a broom (*Plate 479*), take several shucks about three inches long and tie with a string about a third of the way down. Take a straight pin and shred the lower two thirds. Stick a toothpick, or other small stick, in the top for handle. Put glue on the end of the stick to make it stay on the shucks. Then slide the "broom" handle through the doll's hand.



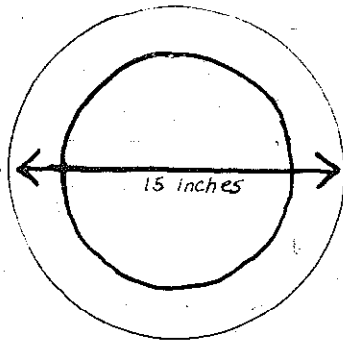
HATS

Many people have inquired about the cornshuck hats that were sometimes worn to church. We heard that Mrs. Ada Kelly made these cornshuck hats. We went to see her and she was willing to make one for us. As she made it, we took a set of photographs and have made a list of instructions to show how one can be made. The hat Mrs. Kelly made for us was a miniature, but there is a drawing of the pattern including the dimensions for an average-sized head.

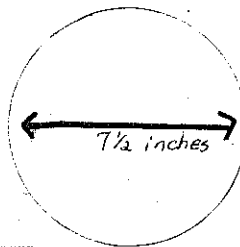
Shuck several ears of corn; discard the outer shucks and any shucks with blemishes. Put the shucks in water until they are wet and pliable (about fifteen minutes). To make a pattern for the hat, you need to cut the pattern out of a newspaper or piece of brown paper. Materials needed are stiff buckram, muslin for the lining, cornshucks dried in the fall, thread, a needle, and a pan of water to keep the cornshucks wet.

ANNETTE REEMS

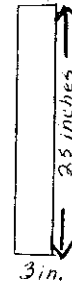
Photographs by Barbara Taylor and Stan Echols.



Brim of cornshuck hat



Top of hat

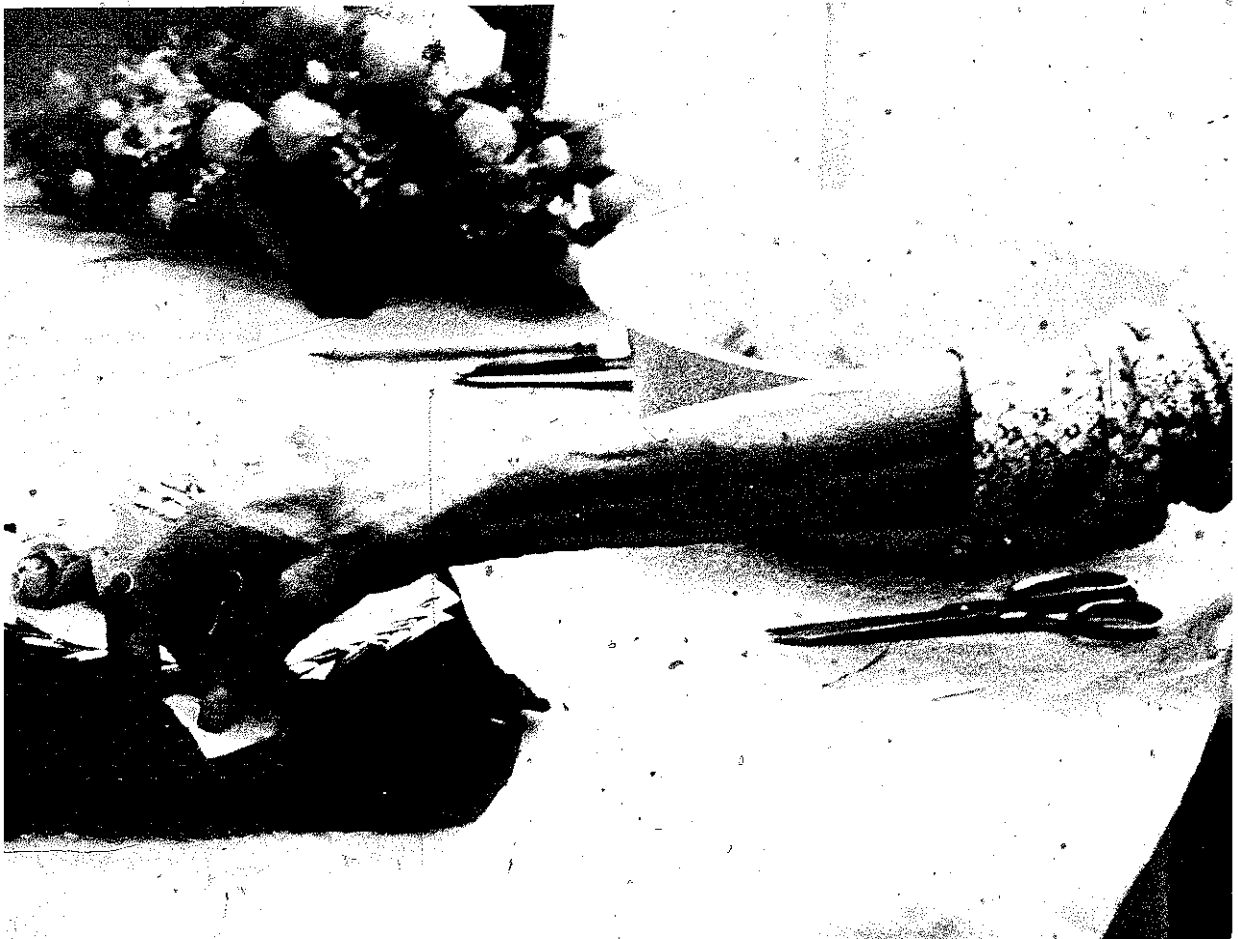


Crown of hat

PLATE 480 This diagram is a pattern for an average-sized cornshuck hat.



PLATES 481-482 Mrs. Ada Kelly cuts the shucks into $1\frac{1}{2}$ " squares (*Plate 481*). Take each square and fold it in half and then in half again, causing the folded shuck to have a point like the one Mrs. Kelly is holding (*Plate 482*).



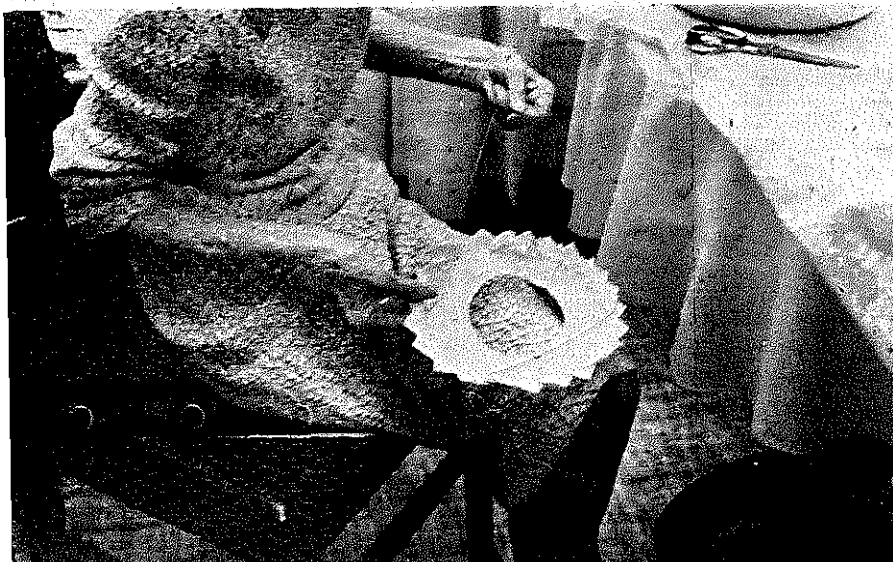


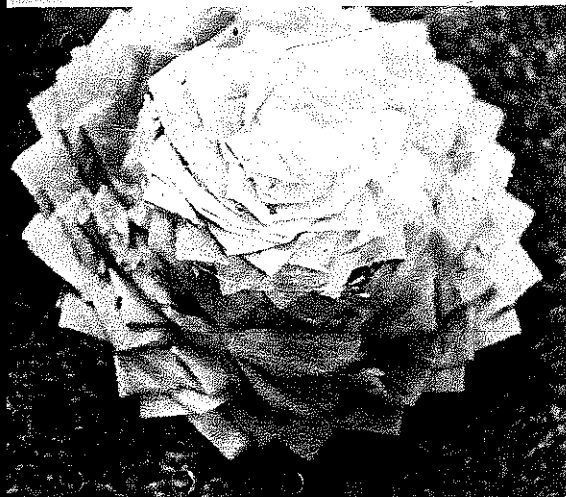
PLATE 483 Sew the shucks on buckram, starting at the outer edge and going toward the center.

PLATE 484 Sew the shucks on the crown with the points of the shucks downward; then sew the ends of the crown together.



PLATE 485 When the crown is finished, place it down on the brim and sew the crown onto the brim.





PLATES 486-488 Sew the cornshucks on the top, starting at the outer edge and moving toward the center (*Plate 486*). The shank of a cornshuck can be used at the center of the top, making it look like a flower (*Plate 487*). Place the top of the hat on the crown and sew it on (*Plate 488*). Take muslin or other soft material and sew it onto the underside of the buckram for a pretty lining.



AUNT NORA GARLAND

It seems like each time we visit Aunt Nora, she's in the kitchen cooking something that really smells good. She always has a basket of homemade biscuits sitting on the table. "I cook twelve biscuits every day and if Raleigh doesn't eat them, the kids will, so they're all gone by the end of the day."

Aunt Nora lives in a stone house north of Clayton, Georgia. She doesn't live on a dirt road way back in the hills, but right on the highway next to a block building which she and her husband, Raleigh, owned and in which they operated a grocery store for many years. They sold out last year, but she still has many things to remind her of the store—cartons of Coke bottles stacked against a wall; the building itself; and an old cash register which they bought secondhand twenty-five years ago. The time-worn register is perched on an ancient cabinet, both cracked and peeled, showing the effects of age and use. There is also an old meat-chopping block and a big black pot sits in the back yard.

It's difficult to characterize Aunt Nora because so many "little things" make her unique. She has made quite an impression on me; I hope I am able to convey this to you. Aunt Nora has that loving kindness toward humanity that everyone should have. She's not afraid to tell a person how much she cares about him, or to help a neighbor when he's in need. Her faith in God is so amazing that she spreads His love to everyone without even realizing it. She's worked with God for a long time through faith healing as you can read on pages 352-55 in *The Foxfire Book*.

ANNETTE SUTHERLAND AND ANNETTE REEMS

"Back then . . ."

I was lying on the bed the other night just thinking about how I love country life. We lived in a great big log house. The living room was fixed pretty on the inside. I can almost see it in my dreams. There was a door going through there and a big stairway. You'd go upstairs a piece, turn back and go upstairs again, and there was a big room. Back then people didn't have a living room—just one big room, with two beds in the back of the house, but how nice we kept them. Just white as snow, and we had a pink bedspread on one with a big peafowl and a blue one on the other. I can see them sitting up against the head of the bed. People used to have pillow-shams, they called them. They'd tack them up over the headboard of the bed and they came down over the pillows. Oh, we thought they were pretty. [We had a] great big kitchen with a fireplace and [another] fireplace in the living room.

We used to live up near Sylvan Lake. You don't go right by Sylvan Lake, you keep on that road along by that big mill. I went to that mill there a many a time. I used to go and watch them grind the meal we had to eat. There's been a mill [there since] before I was born, I guess. It works now. They probably don't grind it, I reckon, but they could if they wanted to. That's where we ground it. I carried many a pail. My uncle owned it, you know.

My parents treated me real good. Daddy was seventy-five year old when he died and Mother was eighty-four. That's been a long time and I don't have any family [anymore] of my own but a sister and she's in a rest home. Oh, we had a happy home. We all had thanks at the table and they was real good to us.

We'd go out and play ball. That's about all we had to do. It was awful fun. We played town ball. If you was caught three times you came out of the ring. Generally I was caught out.

On Christmas we would go a'serenading—a whole crowd of young people. We'd all gather up and put on old things and go a'serenading. Then after we got to the last place, we'd play till about one or two o'clock.

Really we never did play much because we worked. Very little did we play, but on Sunday all we had to do was to go off. If it was springtime with all the leaves, then we'd make leaf dresses and hats and things. We'd come back with dresses and hats made of leaves and sit all day and swing on grapevines. It's a wonder we hadn't been killed going from one hill to another on a grapevine. Never thought about getting hurt.

We lived close to the graveyard and it was right down the hill to Taylor's Chapel. The pine needles was just as thick as can be over there. We'd make

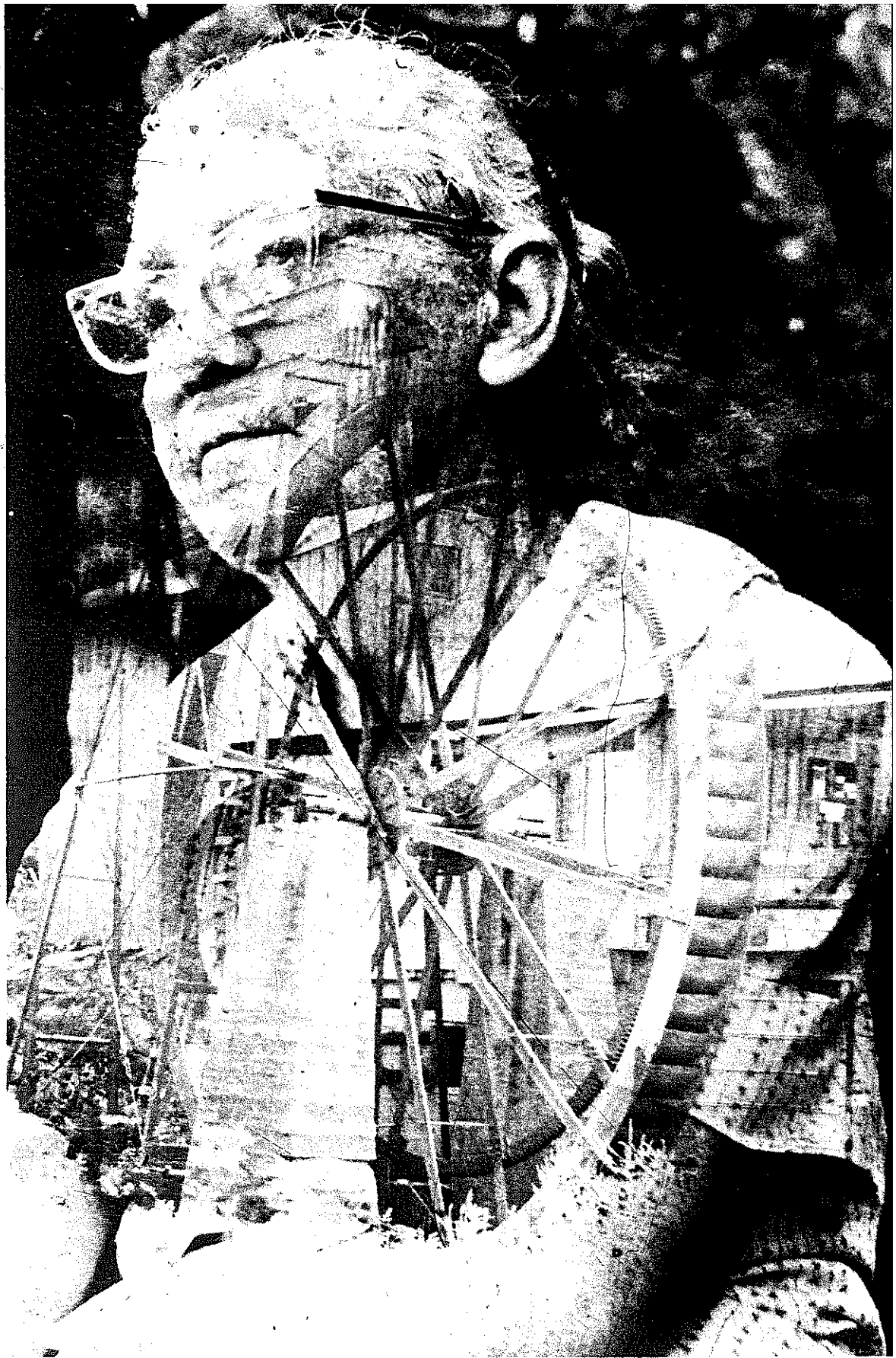


PLATE 489

us a sled and get right up there at the graveyard and slide from it to the road. That's about all the recreation we had when I was little.

We all got along like babies. I had two sisters and five brothers. I'm the baby of the flock though.

We'd have a cornshucking and after that we'd have a candy drawing. You had a lot of corn. People gathered the corn then and they'd go around the evening before and invite them to the cornshucking the next day. Two or three women would come help get dinner and we'd kill the hogs and have plenty of backbones and ribs, a big pot full. Mother had a big pot and she cooked that mess of backbones and ribs, and she cooked chicken, you know, and made dumplings, a sweet potato pie, a grape pie and all these things. Yes, we had plenty. We had lots of good things to eat. I guess things that people wouldn't notice now. That would go on for about six to eight weeks but switching to other people's houses. If we didn't get done, and sometimes we didn't, then we'd have two cornshuckings, but you know, it didn't cost a thing. We'd just have to fix dinner and if it was late when we got through, we'd fix supper. We never thought about charging for anything like that.

If anyone was sick, you'd chop up their wood and carry it in the house for them, and wash their clothes, clean their house for them, and do everything you could for them. "Love your neighbor as yourself" and you know we believed that.

We had candy-pullings too. We'd make up the syrup. We always had a big cane patch and we'd make the syrup and begin to pick it up and get it through. A crowd would gather around and we'd have a circle candy-pull. This was sort of dating, too. The boy would choose the girl that he wanted to pull candy with and he'd pull candy with her.

We went to church twice [on Sunday], and the one that lived farthest away, why all the other young people would go visiting to get to be together. Then when the chinquapins came in (Ral's family had a big orchard then, just little trees that had just been set out) we'd all gang up there and hunt chinquapins and things like that. That was a great thing for us to do. They're like a chestnut, only smaller. We used to string them up on great big long strings. My sister came one time and my mother had strung up about four big strings and hung them up, you know. We had a big dinner and she thought Momma would give them to her and she asked, "Momma, what are you going to do with those chinquapins?"

Momma said, "Nothing. I just hung them up there for children to beg for." We thought that was real funny.

My daddy wouldn't let me go nowhere unless my brothers went. They generally went and we had to be in at a certain time—not later than eleven. Some Christmases we went a'serenading and that made it later

because we'd gather at somebody's house after we serenaded. We had to walk; didn't have no other way to go. We all walked together and coupled off. We wasn't in a hurry walking so we got to talk more.

We worked in the field—us children would hoe corn. Mother did the cooking. I believe she had a harder job than we did. I didn't think so then but I can almost see her now. She'd scrape her potatoes; she didn't peel them, she scraped them. Now we don't take time to scrape them; we peel them—Irish potatoes. Land! you'd put them in a pan of water and all that would come off with a knife. I can almost see her a'sitting on the porch. She'd hunker down a scraping those potatoes and cook a big black pot of beans and potatoes. We'd all eat hearty. We knew it wouldn't be long when we saw her go to the springhouse after the milk and butter till she'd call us for dinner. We had the cows and we made our own butter. She'd churn and she'd take the milk and butter every morning and set it in the springhouse, and before she'd call us to dinner she'd go and get some. She'd cook that big pot of beans and put them long potatoes right beside those on top of the beans. They'd just burst open and be so good with onions and things. She'd put a big piece of streaked meat in it. We'd eat and then she'd hunker down scraping more potatoes to fix another pot for supper.

We made cottage cheese. We grew everything we had nearly. Dad would kill four or five big hogs—big, fat hogs—and we'd salt them down. You can't keep them that way now. But he'd salt them down and we'd have plenty of meat to do us. Oh, I dreaded that fried sausage. We just fried sausage and canned it, you know; we had it the rest of the winter. We dried sweet potatoes and dried apples, and boiled them too. We cooked them and made pies. We dried [the potatoes and apples] on a scaffold. We used an old door laying across two pieces of wood. You boil those potatoes till they get to where you can stick a fork in them, and then peel and slice them and lay them on a cloth on that big table and dry them. We'd have them all winter. Everybody did that—not only us, but everybody.

We had four big cherry trees and they were always just as red. I looked like a flower pod and I was little. Well, I was so slim, you know. I've always been little. Up to here lately I weighed a hundred pounds. So I was the one that could get up in the cherry tree and pick cherries. I never saw the like. And we always canned and picked fifty to seventy-five cans of wild strawberries. Daddy's field was just red with them. And we'd also put up apples. Apple sauce it's called now. We put that up in churns. We made apple butter out of syrup. We had just as many good things to eat back then, or we thought it was just as good. It would be a treat for people now to have what we had back then. Mother would bake

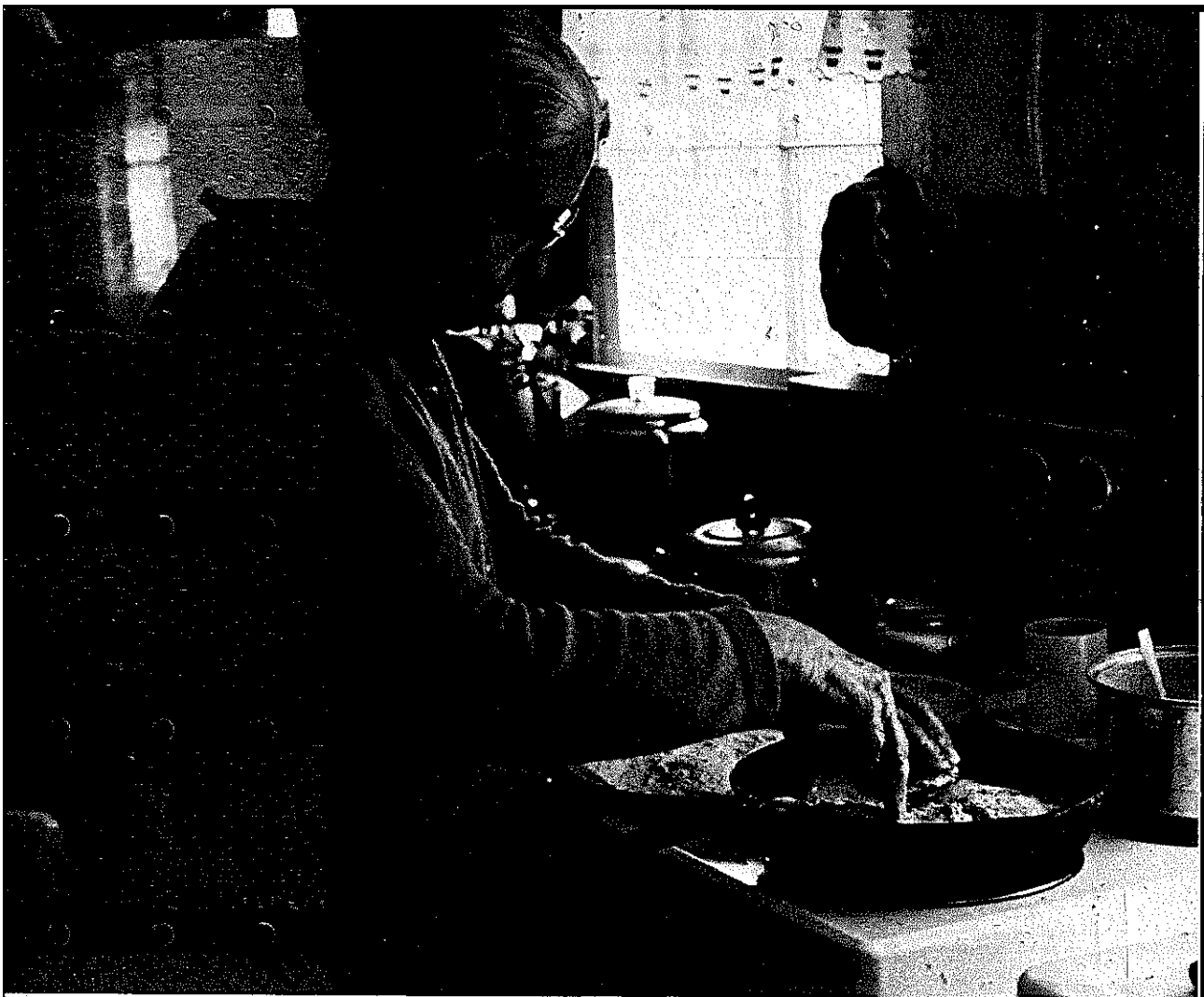


PLATE 490

five or six fruit cakes, real thick, of sweet bread, which she made out of syrup. You know, people never heard of a [layer] cake. We didn't know how to make [layer] cakes. All we could make was great big cakes out of syrup and sweet bread because [we didn't have] stoves.

You know, the first stove I ever saw was a Wilson Patent Stove. I'll tell you about the first [cook] stove I ever saw in my life. My mother had been to her Aunt Jane's, right here in town. She found out that her aunt had a stove. Well, she came back home and wanted Daddy to know about it. It had two little eyes at the top and we wanted it. He told us to go back to Aunt Jane's [and find out where she ordered it]. It finally came and they put it up, built a fire in it, and we just got the wood, thinking that it was the awfulest thing in this world—people [still] cooking in a fireplace. We hadn't had a stove and that was the first one that came out. The neighbors came in to see it and it began to smoke. Well, Momma watered the fire out of it and she walked to Aunt Jane's to see

what the matter was with it. Aunt Jane said, "Honey, the newness is burning off it. The polish will soon burn off and it will be all right." Well, we were so happy with that stove. We baked bread on it, just a batch, you know. We had had to bake bread in that fireplace but we didn't have to after that. The stove had an oven in it and little eyes. The people came in to see what was a happening and from then on nearly everybody just tried to get three dollars to get them a stove.

This must have been about nineteen and five and I was born in about nineteen-one. Now I'm seventy-one but I must have been about five or six. It might have been nineteen and six. I remember that stove so well and we even made a poem about it:

So well do I remember
The Wilson Patent stove
That Father bought and paid for
With cloth the girls had wove.

All the neighbors wondered
When we got the thing to go.
They said it would burst and kill us all
Some twenty year ago.

But twenty year ago, ago
Just twenty year ago
They said it would burst and kill us all
Just twenty year ago.

It never did burst. It was a stove like any other stove, but you know, we hadn't never saw one before.

On Christmas we had a big stack of apple pies, maybe a dozen of them, made out of dried apples. Well, Momma would make a big stack like that and pumpkin custards and make some sweet bread. We baked it on the fireplace. We wouldn't of known how to bake regular cakes. Daddy would always put a big barrel of apples away and they'd keep so good and he'd have a pretty good size barrel full of chestnuts. We'd roast them in the fire and we'd hear the serenaders coming and Daddy would go and get a basket of apples and bring them out when he heard them coming down the hill. He would always reach up to get his gun and shoot straight up in the air. That meant the treat was on them; course we always treated them. Oh, I can almost see him reach up and get that gun, then shoot it straight up. That would be on Christmas eve night. We just set around the big old fire. We had a great big fireplace. We'd always get hickory wood for the fire and we'd have it all in and we'd roast chestnuts in the ashes.

We had a Christmas tree but we didn't have anything on it . . . only a string of popcorn, that's all. We'd string up popcorn and have it real pretty and white. Santa Claus came and he'd bring us a piece of candy and maybe an apple or an orange, and a piece of sweet bread that Mother had baked. We'd hang our stockings, great big long stockings, and that's what would be in it, but now we never let on that we knew Mother had done that. We just took that as the best treat. We couldn't wait to get up every [Christmas] morning to see what was in our stockings. We didn't exchange nothing though. Nobody bought nobody nothing. [We] didn't get a thing but a big dinner on Christmas Day. We got up at four o'clock everyday, but if we thought there was something in our stockings, my brother and I would get up before then [on Christmas morning] just to see what was there. We'd act like it was so good and us knowing Mother made it.

She did a lot for us. She'd weave our material and spin it too. All of us could spin. It was wool, and Mother had to have it to weave with. We'd spin the thread. Everyone, even my brother, could knit. He could knit a pair of socks as fast as Mother could and there wasn't any shame in it: no, not a bit in the world. Everybody was just alike.

We even made our own soap. Daddy would always fix Mother an ash hopper and burn hickory wood and she'd put the ashes out in the hopper and burn her lye slow, and she made the soap. We washed the dishes with homemade soap and you know, now it would eat our hands up. It didn't then. We used grease and lard for our hands. We didn't have any kind of lotion.

I ordered the first lipstick I had. I sent off to where you get something to paint your face with. It was in a little box and there wasn't a thing but grease in it. We'd use a little of that on our face—just red grease. They used that to paint their cheeks with. We painted our faces a right smart. It wasn't paid much attention back then, but when my lipstick come, I let all my girlfriends use some of that old greasy stuff on their faces.

It wasn't like this generation. We all wore long dresses. We wore our dresses way down to our feet. 'Course that's coming back in style. I've got my girls' pictures with their dresses way down below their knees and their hair done up in a ball. [We] never seen no short hair. [There] wasn't no such thing.

Now I had so much pretty brown hair that I put it up in three big balls behind me. We thought that was pretty and it was. When the style changed, we wore a big bow in our hair back there.

We'd watch other people and if somebody else made something new, we made it too. We didn't have no fashion books or nothing to sew by.

My sister was a dressmaker and she could make a dress in a little while. She sewed for people. She'd look at a picture and cut it out, and then sew it. [She] didn't have a pattern or nothing. She cut it out of the newspaper sometimes—the pattern to fit you—and you'd just tell her how you wanted the dress made and she'd make it. She'd sew after dark and a lot of times put the sleeves in backward, and I'm the one that would have to take them out. Oh, I dreaded that job worse than anything.

We wore a lot of underclothes but they were made out of sheeting. Yes, we had nice underclothes. They was as white as they could be, with lace on them. They were made out of what you make sheets out of today.

Back when I was young, we wore middy blouses and skirts and gingham dresses. Of course they were nice clothes and made real nice, but it was nothing special from what they have now. I never wore a store-bought dress. You could get a very nice dress for a quarter back then.

I know one time my sister went to town. She wanted something to sew; she got material for a dress for me and some for her. It hurt my feelings awfully bad because she gave a quarter for my material and gave fifty cents for hers. Every chance I got, I wore that dress. I was kind of jealous. That hurt my feelings awfully bad, though.

You could even get a hat for a quarter. They wore lots of hats then, just covered up with flowers or "blossoms" as my sister said.

We didn't have no slippers back in my days. We wore button shoes and then after button shoes went out of style, we wore laced-up shoes—way up to here. Couldn't hardly get to church on time! You'd have to lace up shoes or button them up. There was a thing you'd button them with, a shoe buttoner. It took all you could do to get them on and get them fastened up in time to go to church.

I don't believe in the real short mini dresses. I don't. Now the pants look all right [and] my grandchildren wear them. Pants look a lot better than the mini dresses. I still don't approve of it but that's what they're doing. I don't think the Lord is pleased with it; I just don't. You ought not judge people by the way they dress. No, that's up to them—what they want to do about that—but I think they'll have to do something about it. I'm not saying that I'm the most religious person and I'm not exactly old-fashioned, but I like to see a decent dress come below your knees, just barely below your knees. I'll be glad when styles like that come back. You don't see nothing hardly but pant suits now and old people, as old as I am, I guess, that wears pant suits. I never did have one on; I just approve of dresses and them at decent lengths.

No, pants [were never worn by women and girls] when I was young. And they wouldn't come out in front of a man barefooted for nothing in

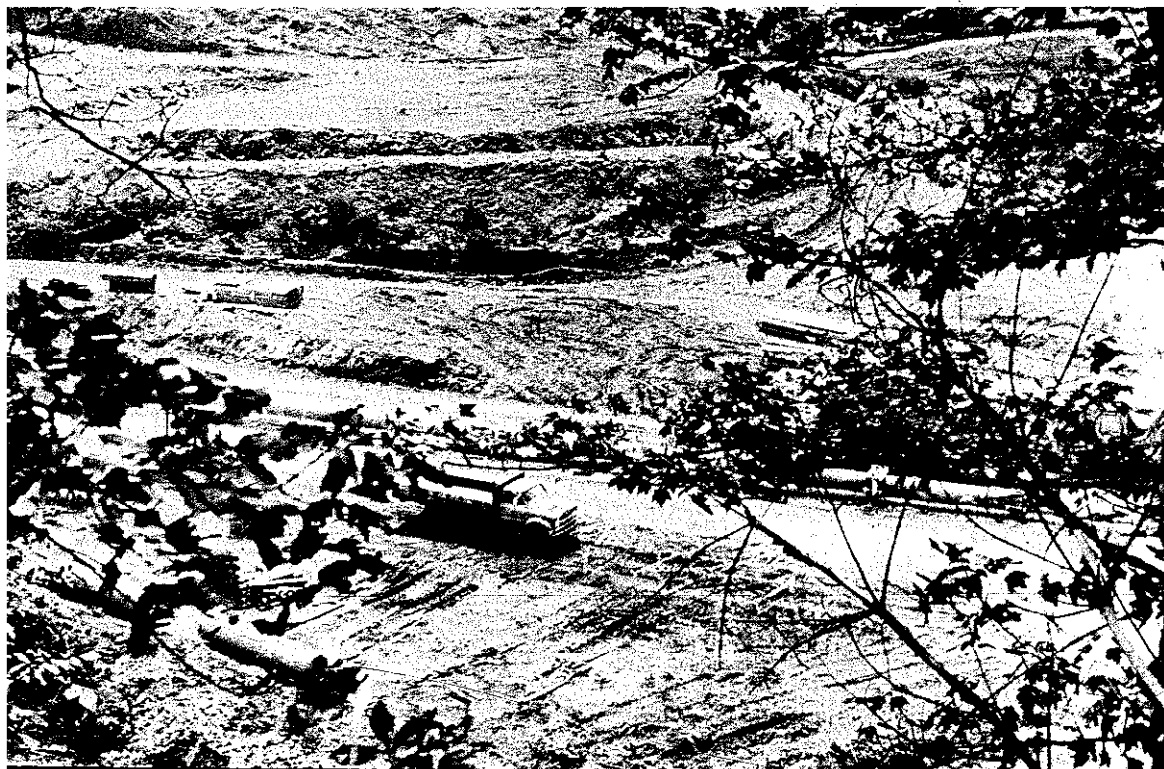
the world. Now they go to school barefooted and any way they want to. When you see a picture of our Lord or Mary Magdalene, they've got on robes, long ones, and they don't have them in mini.

I hear folks say that they don't know what kids are coming to. I hear that. I wouldn't say that . . . I never did say that. They might be good Christian people before they die—wear decent clothes. You know, this is just the world a'changing. It's like the seasons you see changing.

Used to, a woman, if she had eight or ten children, would come into church and she'd bring all those children. Calico cloth then was all the kind of cloth they had. That's the cheapest and it was the next thing to cheese cloth. But you'd see that woman with a dress on with ruffles all over it and a ruffle around the tail and it nearly dragging the ground, and high top shoes you could hear squeaking from the time she started into the door—just a squeaking all over the house. Everybody could tell when she had on a new pair of shoes. I don't know what made them shoes squeak like that. Every child she had could have on a dress just like hers, you know—plumb down to their feet—and a bonnet made of the same calico material. Well, the least child would have on a dress with sleeves of a different kind of material and a collar of another kind to piece it out, because there wouldn't be enough of that material to make a full dress. Everytime I hear the cost of new clothes, I think of that.

People had to be saving [with] their shoes back then. I've known people to carry their shoes over their shoulders till they got to the foot of the hill just below the church and then put them on and wear them into the church. When they started back down the hill after church, why

PLATE 491 Excavating for the lake at Taylor's Chapel.



they'd pull them off again. Babies wore homemade shoes or those button shoes.

We had a lot of nice things like sleds and ox-drawn wagons. They plowed with oxen, you know. We didn't, but there was a lot of people that did. We had cows at home and a big saddle horse. The saddle horse's name was Henry. We just named our animals anything. That was my treat on Christmas to go and ride on Henry. We also had a big pair of mules that were just as fat as could be, and there wasn't a soul who could get them out of the stable but my sister. She just trained them, I reckon. I'll never forget their names—Pete and Kit. Daddy would have to holler for my sister, because if he was going to plow or anything, she would have to go get those mules out. They'd turn their backs in the door, but she could just walk to the door and say, "Come here." They'd turn around and she'd put the bridle on them.

Oh, I can see that little homeplace. They're building a lake there now. They call it Taylor's Chapel, because so many Taylors lived up there. They've even got a new church up there. That's where I was raised. Right there where they're building that lake. It'll be under water soon. That's my Daddy's old homeplace where I lived till I was married.

A couple would generally court about five years. People didn't get married so early back then, you know. They used to say if you married in blue, you'll always be true; if you married in red, you'll wish you were dead. I imagine people married in just anything they had. Most people married at home. You didn't kiss your bride back then. The usual marrying age was about eighteen to twenty. Usually a man had some sort of living he could offer his bride.

Ral and I went to school together. You know the first time I ever did see [Ral], he was just big enough to think about going with the girl he loved; I just fell in love with him then right from the beginning. Seemed like I was marrying my folks. He always called my folks Uncle and Aunt, and we called his folks Uncle and Aunt. I love him very much, better and better every day. By the time we were through courting, we knew each other pretty good.

Ral and I went to Anderson, South Carolina on our honeymoon and spent a week. That was a big trip back then. There's my ring. My other ring was white gold. It got too little and my daughter wears it around her neck on a chain.

Now we've been married fifty-two years and raised seven children. I thank the Lord for it. You know, my family will never leave me. I just turned my kids over to God and they all go to church. They've all accepted Christ and I'm proud of them. We're an awful close family. One never



PLATE 492 Aunt Nora with her grandson, Stephen Brown.

comes in this house without giving me a big hug and kiss. I raised a sweet family. You know, every Wednesday we have a coffee break at one of our houses and we get together and talk and just enjoy being together. My children all come and we drink a cup of coffee and have a piece of cake.

I believe the Sabbath ought to be a day of rest. The Savior rested that day. He made everything wonderful and everything good, and on that day he rested—the seventh day—and I think we ought to. The old Bible said not to kindle a fire on Sunday. I cook breakfast every morning. I cook breakfast on Sunday morning, but we usually eat out for Sunday dinner.

“We had all kinds of hard times.”

Doctors in them times was sometimes hard to find. I was with Dr. Dover one time and he told me, “The first place I ever went was back up the road here. There was a baby being born—her first child.” They called him in there and he stopped. He said he was scared so bad that he left her just in that shape and got on his horse and went home. He said he got to studying and said, “I took an oath. I took an oath to do my duty and I got to go

back up there." He said that the baby was there when he got back there and he was never so happy in his life. That was the first baby he delivered. Every child I've got was delivered in the home, but one.

If it was an emergency you just had to wait. We used Dr. Neville most of the time. He'd ride a horse until in the late years when they got T-model Fords. But people'd ride a horse plumb to Dillard to get Dr. Neville. We'd just have to go and see if the doctor was there. If he wasn't, you'd just have to do it by yourself. [There wasn't] a thing in the world to kill pain. I always had a doctor every time but a baby was generally born [before] the doctor came. He did what he had to do. A neighbor would fix the baby. We got along just as good as you do today.

Ralph Taylor was our dentist. We had Dr. Taylor as far back as I can remember. He's been dead now for several years. A man pulled teeth and he never bothered to deaden your gums or nothing—just pull them. He had "tooth-pullers" as he called them. It might have been wire pliers as far as I know.

If you worked a little, you had a little money. If you didn't work, you didn't have any. Back then young girls could work; I did. You could help can for the government and make some money like that. I'd hoe corn for people and make money. Of course I've never worked out a day since I've been married. My husband has always provided for me and our family.

You couldn't trade things much. You'd pay three hundred dollars now for a milk cow, and back then you did good to get twenty-five dollars for a milk cow. The money is the root of all evil. People worship money and money is what they're looking for. It's the least thing from my mind. I'd like to have some, I like to have spending money, but as far as having just loads of it, I don't care a bit for that unless I had some to help some poor person.

We had all kinds of hard times. About twenty or thirty years ago, a tornado struck through here. We lived at Clayton then. It took furniture in the houses and blew it up on the mountain. My aunt got killed. Why, it was awful. She was blown way down in the meadow and they almost never did find her husband, but he was alive and he lived several years after that. Well, anyway, my mother got up that night and she said, "I want you to get up." My daddy said it was the awfulest roaring. He'd never heard the like in his life. He said, "You'd better get back into the bed before you take a cold."

She said, "No, I'm not going to bed. There's something happening."

At midnight somebody come and knocked on the door and said his sister was blown away—the only sister he had. They found her under a big pile of lumber. She was asleep in the house and everything blew away.

There was a family that lived up there at Rabun Gap and it took



PLATE 493

the upstairs off [their house]. The lady said there was some firewood on the back porch and a piece landed right in between her and her husband, right in the bed—never touched one of them. It took the whole top of the house and sat the children down *on their bed* over there near the York House—all the way from Rabun Gap. It didn't hurt a one of them.

I can also remember back when there was [the old] jail in Clayton. There wasn't much to hinder a jailbreak if a body didn't turn it down. The jail had a chimney and if [someone] took a notion to break out, they'd go out the chimney. It happened pretty often.

The streets were plank—cases on the sides with planks nailed across them. And sometimes the boards were loose and sticking up, and you had to be careful to keep from stumping your toe and falling. That happened to lots of people.

There were only two stores. One was Henry Cannon's and the other Bill Long's general stores. That's about all there was. Well, Bud Richey had a market, no showcases or anything like that. You bought your meat out in the open.

A long time ago, we had panthers. They used to be as thick here as rabbits. My mother said that there used to be a house right down this side of Black Rock where her brother lived. His wife was afraid to stay by herself, so she'd start from Germany [a nearby community] about four o'clock every evening through a path across Black Rock and she said you could hear them on every side, just a hollering. She said they sounded like they were coming right at her. She'd get on down to the house and build a big fire. It'd be late when my mother's brother got in at night and they said there'd be panthers on top of the house just a scratching at the boards, trying to get in the house. On account of that fire, they couldn't come down the chimney. My mother told us that story many times. Now that was in my mother's time, not in mine. I imagine [panthers] were something like a big dog. I've seen pictures of them, but never a live one. There's still wild cats around here. Back then there was a little bit of everything.

I used to have a greenhouse awhile back, but I've sold it now. I worked with flowers but [I couldn't] get help. My husband had to stay in the store and that left me right by myself. I had all kinds of flowers. I sold a lot of them. I made good in the flower house. I worked that for about five years.

But religion holds all in my life. I'm Baptist, you know, and I work on the mission field. I've traveled and been in every house in this county, and I've had prayer with them. On Christmas, I [used to] deliver Christmas boxes. The last time I went around, I delivered fifty-two boxes to the poor. They'd have cakes and jellies and different kinds of food—oranges, apples, candy, bananas. I know I went to a place that the lady herself had built her house. It was a little shack. That was the worst I'd ever been hurt. The little girl was over here that morning and I said, "Honey, did you get anything for Christmas?" And she said they only got fifty cents a week for food. Well, I went around and delivered the boxes and I came back by there. I never had been in there; it's just a little shack and the cracks were wide. There was a big old wood stove sitting there just barely a little heat in it. I delivered a toy there. I came on back out to the car and told my brother that they had to have some help. I was crying. I delivered their box for Christmas, and came home and baked them two cakes.

My sister can cure the thrash. There's a lot of people come here that think I can, but I can't. My brother wanted to teach me how, but I didn't want to know.



PLATE 494

[When someone comes for help and you can help them] they just commence to getting better. I've seen it happen. A faith healer just says a little verse from the Bible. You say one to take off warts and to stop blood, too. I'm called every week for something like that, but I can't tell you how. That's between God and me.

There was a man here a while back standing against a truck. I'd been to town and when I came back, the kids called to me. I went down and that boy's nose was a'gushing. I said, "Son, do you believe I can stop that?"

He said, "Yes, I do." It stopped. A person has to have some faith in what you're doing.

I can draw out fire and that's the most wonderful thing there is nearly. You have to be present to draw out fire. I know this lady. She has bleeding ulcers and comes to me nearly every week saying her ulcers are bleeding. I can draw that fire out, but she's got to be here and believe that I can do it. I believe God is working in me to help people. That's another part of my mission.

I was a young woman when the flu epidemic hit our community. There wasn't anybody in the community that didn't take it but me. My folks all had it and it killed more people than the war did. I was the only one up. Every morning I'd see that my folks were cared for and all in the bed. Then

I'd go down the road and fix people some soup or something to eat. Then I'd come back and walk to Germany and fix those people something to eat, and try to care for them. There was a family that lived right down below us (the man died here a while back). I went to their house one morning and they were laying all over the house on quilts and things with nothing but a big old fireplace. I made them some soup and fed them. The next morning his wife and two children were dead and there was nobody to dig graves. I reckon this man dug the graves himself. The next day I saw him carrying his wife and two children to the graveyard.

The doctors just couldn't get around to every place. Dr. Green, Dr. Neville, and Dr. Dover and I just traveled all the time trying to fix people something, and trying to do something for them. I felt like I was doing what the Lord wanted me to do and that he spared me to take care of the rest. A lot of young people today would hardly go see them, much less do anything for them, but I've done everything I could. That's what I mean by the mission field.

All this was going on during the war. Me and my husband were married during war times. Sugar was thirty cents a pound. Imagine that! You were allowed a sack of flour once a month and five pounds of sugar, I believe it was. That was World War I. But I'm not going hungry, because God will take care of His children.



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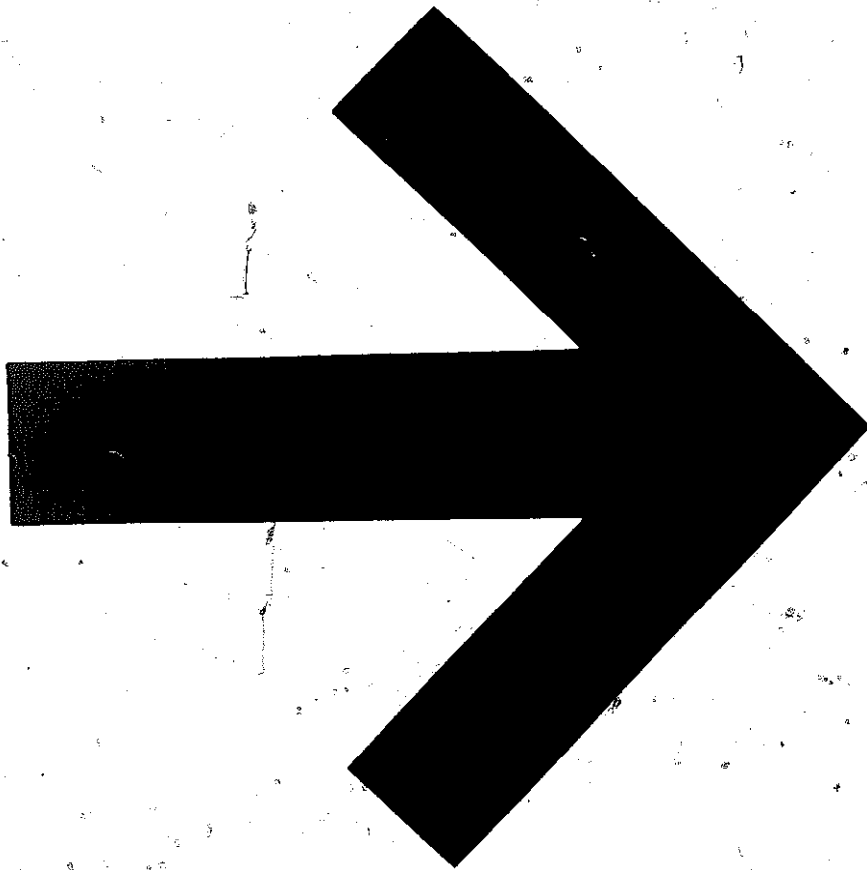
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